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Featuring

A Whispering Mummy

by Charles Fulton Oursler

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

A WHISPERING MUMMY. By Charles Fulton Oursler..... 3

SERIAL STORY

THE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS—PART II. By Laura Reid Montgomery.. 23

SHORT STORIES

THE CROOK'S LAST SHOT. By Albert Chenicek..... 18
THE MAN WITH THE CRUTCH. By Frederic W. Johnston..... 30
THE CHIEF'S BIG BLUFF. By Merritt L. Alden..... 39
THE MAN WITH TWO RIGHT HANDS. By Katherine Stagg..... 45
BEWARE OF CLUES. By Harry J. Samuels..... 53
THE CAPPERS. By J. M. Scanland..... 56

MISCELLANEOUS MATTER

PHANTOM SPECTACLES IN NEW MEXICO..... 17
REAL LIGHTNING MADE..... 21
1,000 YEARS BEFORE COLUMBUS..... 22
A FLAPPER GHOST..... 29
ABOUT SIGNATURES..... 37
SUCH HOME-MADE GOLD WOULD BANKRUPT UNITED STATES..... 38
EVOLUTION THEORY OF HUMAN SPEECH..... 42
GREAT MEN'S PETS..... 43
FACTS ABOUT A DESERT..... 44
TRICK INSTRUMENTS..... 52
ORIENTAL JUGGLING..... 59

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Our Next Number

IT has always been our custom to notify our readers in advance what they may expect in the next number of this magazine. There is an element of curiosity and interest in knowing what to expect, and a certain amount of pleasure in anticipating. We are quite pleased with the excellent quality of the forthcoming stories as they are all extraordinarily good. The feature story was written by one of the cleverest actresses in New York. Beulah Poynter writes stories and plays with equal facility. Her latest novelette is called "Trapping the Jewel Smugglers," and deals with a type of detective work that is always fascinating. Every chapter will rivet your attention. John Warren is the author of one of the short stories that will charm you. It is entitled "P'rob-Bation," and deals with a girl of the underworld who would sacrifice life itself to save her respectable sweetheart from the toils of the police.

The story "Kid Spanish," by J. C. Kofoed, is another powerfully dramatic story with an unexpected ending that will please you, and Fred H. Hayn has contributed "With the Spider's Aid," a story that grips you from the beginning. All of our readers who are familiar with the work of Edgar Daniel Kramer will enjoy reading "The Ray of Death." It contains an ingenious plot, and some clever detective work that exposes the author of a peculiar crime. There will be several more stories which we have just selected, and a number of very interesting short articles on various subjects. In fact there will be sixty-four pages of the best and most carefully selected matter you ever read.

We are having a slight change made in the cover of "Mystery," and the first number will appear July 15th. You will like it, too, as it adds considerable attractiveness to the design. Do not miss the next number, for it is going to be one of the very best we have ever issued.

THE EDITOR.

A WHISPERING MUMMY

by

Charles Fulton Oursler

CHAPTER ONE

ON the roof of a skyscraper, just out of earshot of the hubbub of Times Square, there is a vine-clad bungalow, inhabited by the oddest man in New York.

Bungalows on the roofs of skyscrapers are not a novelty in New York. Artists favor them as ideal studios; authors like them for their quiet and isolation; sometimes the janitors of the buildings use them as homes.

The occupant was neither an artist, an author nor a janitor. His distinction came from an entirely different matter.

I am referring to Doctor Quest, the celebrated private detective. Any one who has ever had anything to do with him will agree that he is the oddest man in New York. Some will say he is the oddest man in the world. The police hold him in awed respect. For Doctor Quest is forever stepping in, after a case has fallen down completely on some crime, and within a very short time he has put his bony forefingers on the guilty man.

I use the word "man" advisedly. Doctor Quest has never put his finger on a guilty woman. He is full of odd quirks and sentimentalities, and one of them is his gallantry. If he finds that a woman is at the bottom of a crime he simply drops the case and disappears. For months at a time he will remain in hiding, and no one knows where he secretes himself.

He is very tall and very lean, and his head is as bald as an egg. His eyes are very wide apart, bold and sparkling blue. His jaw is strong and outthrust, and his nose is long and thin. One of his oddities is his fondness for candy, with which he is always plentifully supplied. Gumdrops with him amount to an obsession. No one has ever known the time when he asked any one to share his sweets. He might give a goldpiece to a beggar—and has often done so—but no one has ever tasted one of his candies.

An old-fashioned fellow, you say? Not at all! As modern as a radio! He has a theatrical tailor make his clothes; his spats fairly shriek to the sidewalks the size of his feet; his jaunty Malacca cane is an institution on Broadway. When he is not chewing gumdrops he is bound to be humming in a dirge-like undertone the very latest jazz melody.

Add to all this the fact that he has one room in his bungalow which his friends have never even peeped into, and which he keeps carefully locked; that he shares his bungalow with his young negro servant, who is a deaf mute, and you have all that is known of Doctor Quest, even to his intimates.

That is to say it is all any of us knew before the Mayland business, and as it was I who was visiting him on the day that extraordinary affair started, I suppose I ought to know as much about it as any one.

I had called on Doctor Quest that rainy afternoon for want of companionship. He was always a gay companion, knowing the latest stories, the latest scandal, the latest everything. But when his negro man, Porter, led me into the cozy living-room, I found the doctor in excited conversation on the telephone and entirely oblivious to my entrance.

"A whisper?" I heard him repeating. "A whisper, did you say? That's damned funny, isn't it? And the man is dead, did you say? And you're locked in with the two of them? Only one of them? How can it be only one of them? What happened to the whispering one, eh? Ha! He's dead too, isn't he? Of course, he must be! Then there are two dead ones, eh? I knew it! And you can't get out? Yes! Yes! You can't get out! I can understand that. Of course! But if you can't get out, how can I get in? That's the question, my friend! And besides I don't know that I do want to get in. The police don't like me mixing up in these little affairs, not since I wouldn't tell them the name of the woman who killed Sperry. Who? Oh! The inner coffin! Well! Well! You stay there! I'll get in—never mind how; *I'll get in!*"

He replaced the receiver briskly on the hook. Then he turned around and faced me. The top of his bald head was glistening with excitement. For a moment he looked at me blankly. Then he thrust a searching forefinger into his vest pocket and withdrew a gumdrop of villainous green. Poking this into his cheek, he continued to stare at me as if he had never seen me before in his life.

"Good-afternoon!" I said reprovingly.

"It's a devil of an afternoon!" he exploded. "Livers of a duck, but it's a deuce of an afternoon! Do you know, Larkins, that now and then something happens on a soggy, rainy day like this? Do you realize this is the kind of an afternoon the devil fancies a picnic? Can't you fancy him prowling around in weather like this, looking for excitement—hey? Excitement—hey? What? Yes, sir! I tell you, Larkins, you want to come with me! You want to come with me! I'll show you what the devil thinks is a picnic!"

"You mean——" I prompted, while he chewed his gumdrop.

"Don't you try to hurry me," he cried, rising quickly. "You'll see. You come along. You come along with me. I'll show you the two of them—and the live one, too. You come along with me!"

Any time that Detective Quest invites you to come along with him, you come along. You won't regret it. Wherever that man goes something happens. I went along with him, quite assured that I would not be bored.

Nor was I.

When we emerged into Times Square he swung his long arm with his stick, like an ancient necromancer moving his wand, and as if summoned by an occult power, a taxi drew up to the curb and we clambered in.

"Drive to the Arkshorn Building," he commanded. "And drive like forty, too. Don't mind the traffic cops. They all know me!"

The chauffeur so implicitly obeyed the instructions of Detective Quest that in less than fifteen minutes we drew up in front of the Arkshorn Building. It was late of a Saturday afternoon, and only a watchman stood guarding the quiet elevators.

"Sixteenth floor," said Quest crisply.

As if he had traveled the hallways of the sixteenth floor many times, Detective Quest proceeded briskly through a maze of corridors, and finally paused before a solid wooden door, on which was painted in gilt letters:

"Egyptian Balsam and Mixture Corporation,
GERALD HARVIS,
President and General Manager."

Quest raised his stick and pounded on the door.

"Are you there, Mr. Mayland?" he shouted.

A muffled reply came from behind the door.

"Keep calm!" bellowed Quest. "I'll be in there with you in just a moment."

He drew from his pocket a bunch of keys and fitted one into the lock.

"The poor devil inside can't get out, and he's locked up in there with a slice of hell, all right," he remarked to me abruptly. "But I'll get in to him. Just one second, now."

Pausing, he fished a red gumdrop from his overcoat pocket. Thus fortified, he set to work with his skeleton key.

"This key will open any lock ever invented," he confided, as he wormed it into the keyhole. "Just you watch!"

As he spoke the door swung inward, and the two of us stood staring at a scene of grotesque horror.

In a chair near a flat-topped desk sprawled the body of a man, his vest and shirt stained with blood. A revolver lay on the floor. The man was dead.

At the other side of the desk a white-faced young man, his eyes staring, his hair rumpled, was looking at us as if demented with terror.

Reared against the wall was a mummy case —a brightly painted inner coffin, the door of which was swinging shut just as we looked into the room.

"Look out for that mummy!" cried the man. "It's alive!"

CHAPTER TWO

DETECTIVE QUEST acted his usual eccentric self even in this amazing situation.

He helped himself to two gumdrops, one blue, one pink, before moving across the threshold.

His next action was equally characteristic. Without pausing either to examine the mummy case, to which the gentleman with the ruffled hair was pointing, and also paying no attention whatever to the dead body listlessly sprawled in the swivel chair, he took two energetic steps forward and faced the living man.

"You still insist, then, that the mummy can talk?" he asked eagerly.

"It can—it did—it——" fluttered the agitated gentleman, until he was halted by a peremptory gesture from Detective Quest.

"My dear man," said the detective severely, "I must insist that you let me do the talking, at least until you are calmer. Wait a moment while I shut the door!"

"Don't do that!" burst in a shout from the stranger. "You will lock us in again!"

Quest slammed the door shut.

"I got in, didn't I? Well, I can get out again when I want to. Now please set down. Forget all about the mummy. Forget all about our dead friend here. Remember that a great deal will depend upon the accuracy of your statement to me. Now go ahead. Explain everything—why you think that mummy is alive, why this man is dead, and all about it. And first, have you notified the police?"

"No," replied the excited stranger. "You will understand why I did not when I tell you my story. But I had heard of you and I appealed to you!"

"That was a very sensible proceeding," smiled Detective Quest benignly. "Now go on and tell me. Who are you, anyway?"

The man ran a bronzed hand through his disordered hair and contracted his brows, as if he found it hard to remember who he was or what he was doing.

"My name is Bart Mayland," he began dazedly. "I am a native of New York City and the last of my family. I was in the brokerage business downtown for a number of years, and was on the way to making a lot of money. But in the struggle of business I undermined my health, and my doctors told me that if I wanted to live I would have to make a complete change in my way of living and go off into the wilds and rough it!"

"That was sensible advice," commented Quest, chewing on a white gumdrop.

"Yes, but I did not want to take it," cried Mayland in a sudden burst of feeling. "It meant more to me than you can guess. You see, I was in love. I was in love with the most wonderful girl in the world. Of course every man in the world fancies his is the most wonderful girl. But I was sure of mine. When the doctors told me I had to go away I was heartbroken. I wouldn't marry her when my health wasn't right, and so I went to her, told her the story and offered to release her!"

"She wouldn't do it—not if she was the right kind," said the detective, his eyes steadfast on the dead man in the chair.

"She didn't," confirmed Mayland, gulping hard. "She promised to wait. But we entered into a strange agreement. We would not write to each other during our absence. That might sound odd to you, for we were both des-

perately fond of each other. But we were both spiritually in earnest, and we wanted to be sure. If, without hearing from each other, we still felt our love a real and vital thing, then we both felt certain it *would* be the real thing, and not the passionate flash in the pan which keeps the divorce courts busy. Do you understand?"

"Quite!" assured Detective Quest, munching gravely.

"I am starting way back, so that you will understand just the nature of the amazing plight I now find myself in," apologized Mayland. "But I will cut it short. I went into the Canadian wilderness, and for three years I went through agony. More than once I wanted to die. All that bound my soul to my body was that great love in my heart. And when, last week, I came back to civilization and the doctors pronounced me a perfect specimen of physical manhood, I was jubilant.

"I will be as cruelly direct as was Destiny in her dealings with me. I hurried to New York and tried to find my sweetheart. She had moved from the old neighborhood, and no one knew where she had gone. For two days I searched in vain. Then I ran into an old friend and he told me the truth!"

"She was dead?" asked Quest gently.

"No! A thousand times worse than that. She was married!" groaned Mayland.

Detective Quest fumbled for gumdrops in utter silence.

"I won't tell you how I felt. You can guess. But I don't want you to get the idea that I am a quitter or a coward," proceeded Mayland earnestly. "I had fought a good fight—how hard a fight I haven't the ability to describe. But I couldn't fight any longer. I had nothing left to fight for. So I came directly to the only solution open to me—suicide!"

A silence fell between us. I noticed that Detective Quest was keeping his eyes resolutely on the ghastly face of the dead man, and it was difficult to tell whether he was as interested in Mayland's story as in what he could read on the strained features of the dead face.

"How?" he asked suddenly.

"I engaged a room in a furnished lodging place on West One Hundred and Twenty-first street. Then I bought a rope, tied it securely to a hook in the wall, and fastened a noose around my neck. I was standing on a chair, ready to leap off into eternity, when a quick knocking sounded on my door.

"I paid no attention, but waited in silence for whoever it was to go away. But the knocking continued. It grew in violence, and then suddenly some one kicked the door in. I had foolishly neglected to lock it. I then saw, for the first time in my life, that man!"

Without glancing at the corpse Mayland indicated the dead man in the chair.

"Just a moment. What time was this?" asked Detective Quest.

"Not more than an hour ago," declared Mayland. "He strode in and stared at me, and I cursed him for interrupting. He acted very peculiarly. He said he had come to see me—addressed me by name—on a very different errand, but that it could wait. Wouldn't I delay killing myself for just a moment? Wouldn't I please delay? I didn't feel like killing myself in front of him. The whole situation had suddenly become a bit farcical, if you know what I mean. I told him to name his business and be quick about it.

"He then made me an amazing proposition. He said that not for the world would he interfere with any plans for suicide which I had made. He admitted I was old enough to know my own mind. But he asked me if I wasn't a bit selfish? Who would benefit by my suicide except myself? I felt bound to admit that was the truth. Now, he continued, he stood ready to see me killed in an hour, if I would only do what he wanted me to do. He said he had a different way in which I could kill myself, and everything would go off just the same. I would be dead almost as soon as if I had hung myself there in the furnished room, and I would have the satisfaction of knowing that my self-inflicted death would bring untold happiness to a number of people in deep distress.

"I am a very curious man, Doctor Quest. Even at the gates of death my innate curiosity leaped up at such a proposition. What did the man mean? I asked him, but he waved his hand mysteriously. If I would come to his office—he said he was Gerald Harvis, president of the Egyptian Balsam and Mixture Corporation—he would explain the whole thing.

"I agreed.

"He called a taxicab, and we drove to this place. He sat in the chair there, where you see his dead body now. I sat facing him in this chair. And as he pounded his fists on that green desk blotter, which you now see stained with his blood, he unfolded to me a preposterous and revolting scheme.

"It seems that he was in a bad way. I mean he had used funds invested in his patent medicine company by widows and orphans for margin gambling. And he was dead broke. An exposure was inevitable, and he faced a term in prison. Now, it may surprise you that such a man had a conscience, but he did. He was no wicked villain. He had made a very serious mistake, but he was sorry for it, and he was going to make restitution if he could.

"Only a year before—less than a year it was—he had taken out some very large life insurance policies. He was resolved to die so that his executors could use that money to pay back his creditors. The firm was named as beneficiary for all the policies. Rather decent, don't you think? But the appalling part of the idea was that he wanted me to kill him!

"Yes, gentlemen. He wanted me to shoot him down, dead as a dog. He was actually asking me to murder him. I couldn't do it. I wouldn't do it. Kill myself—yes. I meant to do that. But kill anybody else? Oh, my God, no! I am not a murderer—not even in so good a sense as he had made it out. I flatly refused.

"He argued with me that I could kill myself immediately afterward, or I could let the police take me, and eventually I would die peacefully in the electric chair. I told him no—emphatically no! All this was because of the suicide clause which would have made his insurance policies useless if he merely killed himself.

"Suddenly his eyes narrowed with an evil inspiration. He got up and locked the door, and then pitched the key out of the window. He laughed at me and reached for the telephone. To my astonishment, he called police headquarters. He asked for the lieutenant. When some one responded he told the most blasting and damnable lie I ever heard in my life.

"He told the police that I—Bart Mayland—he mentioned my name and he described me, winking at me all the while—he told them that I had threatened to murder him. Wouldn't they send a policeman to protect him from me. I do not know what they told him.

"When he hung up the receiver he winked at me wickedly. Then he drew a revolver—that revolver—from his desk drawer, and he said to me: 'I am going to kill myself right now. You can't get out of here. They will find me dead. They will remember the plea I made for protection from you. They will say you killed me. If you kill yourself the next moment you will still be regarded as my murderer. That will make my policies all right, my creditors will all be paid, and I can lie in my grave with a clear conscience!'

"I sprang forward and seized his arm. What folly! What terrific madness! I would not be mixed up in such a business. I was willing to be a suicide, but I was too jealous of my reputation to die with the stain of murder on my name. No. I struggled with him. I wouldn't let him put such a thing over on me!

"I think I should have succeeded, gentlemen; I think I am strong enough to have overcome him; I feel sure I could have twisted that revolver from his hand, had not something so damnably impossible happened just then that it knocked me out of my senses almost.

"I hope and pray, gentlemen, you will not come to the conclusion that I am a madman when I tell you what it was. It actually did happen. I am ready to swear to that. With a grating noise the lid of that upright mummy coffin there suddenly flew open. The swathed and sheeted mummy was revealed. In the same moment Harvis stopped struggling and a white fear overspread his florid face.

"'That *thing* again!' he cried hoarsely.

"Gentlemen, if it is the last word I ever spoke in my life, I tell you, here and now, before Heaven as my witness, that that mummy spoke. It whispered—a low, chanting kind of hollow, murmuring sound. It spoke to us. It did! It did!"

He was choking in his hysterical insistence on the truth of his assertion.

"English?" asked Doctor Quest mildly.

"No. A jargon I could not understand. I believe it was ancient Egyptian," declared Mayland with a superstitious shudder.

"Perhaps," agreed Detective Quest soothingly. "What happened then?"

"I don't know!" cried Mayland. "It is all so sudden, so shocking, so infernally mixed. I was watching that mummy. I was listening to the whisper that came from behind its ancient windings of withered shrouding. I was in chills at such a horrible sight and sound. Then I heard a shot! I turned and saw Harvis crumpling back in his chair, blood spurting from a wound over his heart.

"He spoke, gentlemen, before he died. He gasped:

" 'I didn't kill myself, Mayland. I didn't. I didn't do it. That *thing shot me!*' "

Mayland paused for a moment and glanced rapidly from my face back to the squinting, eager eyes of Doctor Quest.

"Gentlemen," he concluded, his voice sunken deep with awe, "Gerald Harvis did *not* kill himself! Those last words of his were sober truth. I don't know who did it, I don't know how he was killed, but I do know that he did not commit suicide!"

"Hey? You know what?" chirruped Doctor Quest excitedly. "How can you be so sure of that?"

Without speaking, Bart Mayland bent down and lifted the revolver from where it lay, directly beneath the hand of the dead man. Silently he passed it to the detective.

Doctor Quest broke the weapon, exposing the rear of the cartridge chamber. A low grunt of surprise escaped him.

Every compartment was loaded with an unexploded bullet!

CHAPTER THREE

DOCTOR QUEST raised the weapon to his nose and sniffed at it. He turned it slowly about in his hands, eyeing it sadly. Then he threw it carelessly back on the floor.

"Is that all, hey?" he demanded of Bart Mayland.

The unfortunate man spread wide his hands in an eloquent gesture of despair.

"What more do you want than a talking mummy and a mysteriously murdered man?" he replied complainingly. "That is all—or practically all that happened. For a while I was too dazed to speak. Then, as I recovered my senses, I tried to call assistance. But Harvis had locked me in. I kept hoping the sound of the shot would attract help, but apparently no one heard it; it is Saturday afternoon and nearly all the offices, of course, are deserted. After a while, when I had made sure that Harvis was actually dead, I began to appreciate the danger of my own predicament. I was facing the electric chair. I had cold shudders at the very thought!"

"Why didn't you go ahead and kill yourself?" asked Doctor Quest. He was drumming idly on the desk and not looking at Maryland when he put the question.

"I told you that," replied Mayland irritably. "Harvis has complained to the police about me. Whether I am alive or dead, my name is bound to be linked with the death of this man. I can't bear the thought of that. I supposed the police were on their way up here in response to his telephone call. If they got here and saw me beside his corpse, they would railroad me to the chair. I was desperate until I thought of you. Some of your exploits were published in the newspapers before I left for Canada. I had heard of you as a wizard detective. My fingers were almost frantic with shattered nerves as I tried to find you in the telephone book.

"And that," concluded Bart Mayland with a heavy sigh, "is all there is to tell. I told you some of the story over the phone, and since that time I have been sitting here, enduring the demon's pet torments, waiting for you to arrive!"

Doctor Quest was poking irritably in one pocket after another. Apparently his gumdrop supply was exhausted. Finally he found a dusty one, which he brew upon fiercely and then popped triumphantly into his mouth.

"This is what is going to happen," he announced, between chews. "You are going to be arrested for the murder of Gerald Harvis. Nothing can prevent that. You are due for a good thrashing in the third-degree room. Nothing can prevent that. But I can prevent your going to the chair if you, as you say, are innocent. You know, of course, that the police wouldn't listen to your story for a moment?"

"That's why I sent for you!" replied Mayland, and Quest, who is exceedingly sensitive to flattery, beamed and smiled.

"Your confidence is well placed, I hope," he purred. "Now, there are certain essentials in your story which must be checked up. First, you are sure you did not know this man?"

With an effort Mayland forced himself to look upon the corpse.

"No!" he insisted. "I never saw him before, never heard of him before, until he interrupted my suicide!"

"You still intend to kill yourself, I suppose?"

"After my name is cleared I still intend to kill myself," Mayland assured him doggedly.

"Hm! If that is true, I think you are putting me to a great deal of unnecessary bother. However, we will continue, and we must be quick about it, because the police may come hammering on that door at any moment. I recall your telling me that when Harvis entered your room, and found you standing on the chair with the rope around your neck, he seemed surprised. He called you by name, and he said he had come to see you on a different errand entirely. Is that correct?"

"That is absolutely correct!"

"Well, hey? How? How did he know your name? How did he know where you were? Why did he knock so loudly, as if he were angry or excited? Why did he take the liberty of kicking in your door? Why, hey? How, hey?"

Doctor Quest seemed to be growing longer, leaner, more bony and more eager, as he bent forward and poked a hooked forefinger at Mayland.

"I don't know!" confessed Mayland, his face a blank.

"But look here, my man. You ought to know! That man had business with you—quite another kind of business, he admits, but nevertheless business!"

"I don't know anything about that," repeated Mayland stubbornly.

"Very well. I am asking these questions to save you from death so that you can kill yourself, remember. Don't make my job too difficult. Have you written to or communicated with any person in New York that might have known this man?"

"No!" exclaimed Mayland.

"Thank you. I know that in all respects you have not told me the truth, but nevertheless I thank you. Now we shall see what we can find out!"

Ignoring the flush which his verbal thrust had brought to Mayland's cheeks, Quest proceeded to forget that either Mayland or myself were present while he began an absorbed examination of the body of Gerald Harvis.

His first business was with the wound, which lay directly over the heart, as if the assassin who had fired the shot had taken precise aim.

"Bullet! Bullet! Bullet!" I heard the old man mutter. "Wish I could probe for it. Wish I could muss up things. Better not, though. Better wait!"

However, he did not act entirely on this judgment. He loosened the clothing around the wound and examined the white flesh surrounding it with squinting scrutiny. He made mysterious jabbings and thumpings with his fingers, and then, going over to the window, he threw up the curtain high as it would go, admitting more light, for the rainy afternoon was darkening prematurely.

Carefully turning the swivel chair, so that the feet of the corpse dragged along the carpet, he swerved it so that the light played fully upon the body. Then he renewed his tactics, pausing now and then to chew and reflect.

"This is deeper than I fancied," he muttered once. "There is an important detail that altogether eludes me."

Both Mayland and I were watching him with fascinated attention. Gruesome though his labors undoubtedly were, yet we had the feeling that they held a significance which we would not possibly fathom. Behind that bald and wrinkled head of Doctor Quest we knew was whirring and clicking an extraordinary brain which saw clues and indications of which we were not even remotely aware.

And yet even he had confessed that he was puzzled.

"I am convinced," he said suddenly, and then stopped, a smile on his face that was perilously near to idiocy. I never saw such a smile before on the face of an intelligent man. In the presence of violent death and apparently bottomless mystery, with a man's life

hanging in the balance, the eminent investigator calmly stood up and looked at us and smiled.

It was a smirking kind of smile; a sleek, well-satisfied smile; a smile that under the circumstances was nothing less than sinister. I felt a chill just to see it. Why was Quest smiling at such a time?

Without turning his gaze, he lifted his bony hand and pointed. I followed his gaze, and then I became aware of the triumphant satisfaction behind that smile.

The door of the mummy case was opening again!

Slowly, as if possessed of a volition peculiarly and majestically its own, the lid of that ancient inner coffin was moving. Ponderously yet inevitably it moved. I felt a clammy moisture beading my forehead as I looked at it.

What was going to happen?

As the door fell back completely I beheld the sheeted thing within. Only the outline of the human form inside it was revealed, swathed in coffee-colored wrappings woven thousands of years before. As I looked at it I became aware of an uncanny feeling that it was alive; that something that breathed was hidden within those bandages.

And then I heard it whisper!

CHAPTER FOUR

ALTHOUGH the sound itself was faint, breath-like, indistinct, yet it sounded with clarion resonance on the tense quiet of that little office.

In a babbling kind of murmur it stole upon our ears. Like a sleeper, chanting between his teeth amid uneasy dreams, so that long-dead, swathed and sheeted mummy seemed to be muttering, altogether unconscious of our presence.

Flowing as free as the wind murmuring in the trees, the sound continued, and now I could discern audible syllables. This was no mechanical noise from some distant mechanism. Whatever the source of the mysterious sounds, they were words, language, formulated by lips; human speech, uttered with bated breath—*whispered.*

This was *The Thing!*

This was the ghastly murmur which Gerald Harvis had heard just before the mysterious shot which ended his life.

From where did it come? What was its source? What was the meaning, the intention, the reason for such frightening, idiotic mystery?

I took an impulsive step forward. Forgetting that I was present only by the grace of the old detective's invitation; that I was a mere spectator, privileged only to watch and hold my tongue, I yielded to the desire to seize that dead thing and rip it from its casket, to unwind its ancient sheeting, and expose its rigid body—to pluck out the very heart of its enigma.

I say I took an impulsive step forward. But it was only a step! Before I could take another the long arm of Doctor Quest shot out with amazing swiftness, seized me by the throat and hurled me backward.

The next instant I understood.

There was a terrific report—an explosion—that I thought would burst my eardrums.

Stunned, I reeled back against the wall, gasping with terror, but sufficiently in my senses to understand why Doctor Quest had attacked me.

He had interfered only to save my life.

A bullet—from only God knew where, it seemed—had exploded harmlessly in the plaster a few feet from where I stood.

Had I taken another step I would have been a victim of that second singular shot!

CHAPTER FIVE

MY first reaction, once I had shaken off the tremor of surprise and shock, was to apologize to Doctor Quest and to thank him. But he was very good about it. Indeed, he insisted on blaming himself.

"I should have warned you," he declared. "I suspected that that very thing would happen. As a matter of fact I deliberately tempted it to happen. I was an old fool, not to have warned you both. But there—no harm is done; instead a vast amount of good. For one thing, we have been privileged to observe

a perfect repetition of what Mr. Mayland here described. We know now that such things can happen. For we did behold the miracle of a shot apparently coming from nowhere. That is very helpful, hey? And what's that, hey?"

He had stopped the flow of his eloquence to listen, and well he might. Heavy blows were being pounded on the outer door.

"The police have arrived!" said Mayland heavily.

Quest, without replying, found a yellow gumdrop and stuck it in his mouth, fished his ring of keys from his pocket and opened the door.

Mayland's guess had been correct; two bluecoats stood gazing in bovine astonishment at the tragedy sprawled before their eyes.

Then they recognized Doctor Quest and greeted him with a sullen deference, not unmixed with envy.

"You got here first, eh?" said one of them. "Well, who did it?"

"This gentleman here!" was Doctor Quest's amazing reply. "Bart Mayland is the guilty man. Better arrest him at once!"

CHAPTER SIX

I COULD not refrain from asking questions. When the police had dragged away the protesting and disillusioned Mayland, leaving Doctor Quest and I alone in the office; when I was quite certain there was no one eavesdropping around us, I demanded an explanation.

"Why on earth did you do it?" I cried. "You surely don't expect me to believe you think Bart Mayland guilty, after what we saw and heard right here in this room?"

Detective Quest avoided my gaze. He was studying the hole made in the wall by the second bullet.

"I don't expect anything," he replied. "I don't care what you think. You hear that, hey? I don't care a rapper what you think! I am too busy thinking myself. I've got something to think about. Can't you understand, Larkins—if you can understand anything at all—that the only way I can handle the police is to let them think there is nothing more to the case? That will make them lay their paws off of this mummy—the real core, the heart, of the whole blooming business. They don't know anything about this mummy! If they did they would cart it off to headquarters, and then where would I be, hey? Where would any of us be, hey? You sit tight and watch, Larkins.

"Remember, I've got to find out why Gerald Harvis ever went to see Mayland for in the first place. That is important, if we are to find out about this business. And I've got to find out about this mummy. That is also vital. Now which shall I do first?"

This conversation occurred after the coroner had viewed the body and had it taken to the morgue, and we were left alone in the office with the mummy. Apparently Doctor Quest had no difficulty in obtaining any concession he desired from the police. A bluecoat had been left to guard the place, but he remained outside the door, and we had the room to ourselves.

"Why did he have a mummy in his office? That seems very strange to me," I remarked.

"Oh, that is simple enough," retorted Quest, fitting a key into one of the desk drawers and unlocking it. "They manufactured two or three patent medicines—blood tonics, hair restorers and what not—under the name of the Egyptian Balsam and Mixture Corporation. The mummy was a trademark in their business, and I suppose they thought it in the spirit of modern hokum to have a real office mummy to show investors when they came in. From what I can understand, they sold more stock than patent medicines anyway. Helloa! What's this?"

While he was jabbering away he had been pawing over a lot of papers which he had removed from the top drawer, which he had burglarized. Motioning me not to interrupt, he sat poring over a thick bundle of letters and memoranda in which he seemed to find a ready fascination. I could only sit there, feeling helpless and itching curiously, yet not willing to risk offense by asking questions.

Yet he was not destined to read on uninterrupted. I heard a woman's voice behind me, rising shrilly as she questioned the policeman at the outer door. Then she entered upon us in swift excitement.

"Where is Mr. Harvis?" she demanded pantingly.

As Doctor Quest looked up gravely over his bundle of papers I turned. I was unprepared for the beautiful vision which met my eyes. Here was beauty and charm, blended with a gentle dignity which must command the homage of every manly soul which beheld her. Tall and slender, she had an almost girlish grace, and her face, moulded in such exquisite proportion, seemed like a picture looking out at one from the pages of an old-fashioned romance.

But now her beauty was intensified by anxiety, and her breath was coming fast in the choking grip of suspense.

"What has happened?" she continued before Detective Quest could reply to her first question. "Why is a policeman out there at the door? What right have you to sit at that desk and go through those private papers? I want to know what this means!"

"And who are you, dear lady?" asked Doctor Quest, rising and bowing.

"I am Mrs. Gerald Harvis!" she answered quickly. "Who are you?"

Quest did not lift his bowed head. I knew his old weakness for the feelings of the other sex. This woman did not know that her husband was dead. How was he to break the news to her? I was glad it was to him she was speaking, and not to me. And I was glad again that she had not come earlier; that she had not come upon us, standing beside the crumpled body of her husband.

"Why don't you answer me?" she gasped.

Doctor Quest raised his head and looked at her. His eyes were very gentle as he tried to prepare her for the blow which it was his destiny to give her. But she would not hear him through.

"Is Mr. Harvis dead?" she asked, steadied with a surprising and unexpected composure.

"Mr. Harvis is dead," repeated Doctor Quest. "He was murdered."

For a moment one could have heard the falling of a feather, so intense the silence seemed to me. What would she do? Would she swoon at our feet? Would she fall into hysterics? What she did do was more surprising than anything I could have possibly imagined.

Mrs. Harvis remained calm! I can find no other word for it. I do not mean that she was unaffected by the tragedy; I think she was more affected than a thousand other ordinary women would have been affected if they, not she, had received such news. But it was all held in leash. She just stood there, a storm of emotion inside, but altogether in command of herself without.

Her only sign of weakness was that she reached out to steady herself against the side of the desk.

Instantly Quest was at her side and assisted her into the swivel chair at the side of the desk. I could not help feeling that she should not have sat there; it was the chair in which her husband had been murdered. Of course she did not know this; the thoughtful Doctor Quest had thrown papers across the blood-smeared desk blotter, and she sat down, white-faced but plainly determined not to surrender to her feelings.

"Tell me about it, please," she said softly.

"You are quite sure that you want to hear about it now?"

"Tell me all there is to tell; I am strong enough to hear it!"

I felt a tremendous admiration for this beautiful woman. Such courage was epic. I realized that a woman such as she could inspire the very deepest passion in the heart of a good man. Had fortune been kind enough to have given me the love of such a woman, I think I should have been willing to give my life for her. While Doctor Quest was talking with her I could see the repressed and tender admiration in his eyes. No need to wish that he would be gentle with her in this dark hour! He looked upon her as if he were wishing she were his own daughter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE detective is a bachelor. I think there is some secret romantic episode in his past which made him a bachelor. That is why, I am sure, he is so kind-hearted with women.

At the request of Mrs. Harvis, who remained imperturbably self-controlled, he had related, in modified form, the story of her husband's murder. I observed that he omitted all reference to the story which Mayland had

told us; that he laid stress on the fact that her husband had been mysteriously shot. No word came from him regarding the mummy, nor did he say anything about Harvis's desire that Mayland shoot him, so that his insurance money could pay off his creditors.

Having told her all this—and during the recital he never once took his bright blue eyes from her face—Quest reached out a hand that actually trembled and said:

"Please, Mrs. Harvis, I beg of you, rise. Stand up! Stand up! There!" He uttered a profound sigh of relief. "Now stand over there. Thank you. I have subjected you to an incredible cruelty, though you are not aware of it. I tender you my heartiest apology, and assure you that I did it only because of my interest in solving this extraordinary murder!"

She looked at him wonderingly.

"I don't seem to understand," she faltered.

"Let it pass!" he pleaded humbly. "I shall explain later, perhaps. If you will just be seated there"—she sat in the chair which Mayland had occupied—"I shall be glad to explain later perhaps. Meanwhile there are more important matters to consider. I have told you only a part of the story—that your husband is dead, that he was mysteriously murdered, and that it is up to us to solve the mystery. I have not told you that an innocent person is rather heavily involved, and that if the police have their way, he will pay the penalty for a crime of which I am morally certain he is guiltless!"

"Who?" she gasped. There was a world of suspense in her tone; her calm was gone; some cloaked and hidden self-interest was betrayed in that sudden and agonized question.

"That, too, must wait," replied Doctor Quest soothingly. "All in due time, dear lady; all, I do assure you, in good time. You have acted splendidly. Your calm has been heroic, and I honor you for it. Will you not try to be calm just a little while longer and answer some questions I should like to put?"

"I'll try," she assented, her eyes troubled, her hands twitching nervously.

"Will you tell me first if you were in love with your husband?"

It was an astounding question. I could conceive no remote reason for it. Did the man suspect that this gentle woman had killed her husband because she was unhappy with him. The direct brutality of it made me angry.

Its immediate effect, however, surprised me. The same calm which had sustained Mrs. Harvis—on which she, by sheer will power, had managed to maintain—did not desert her now. She looked directly back into the sparkling eyes of the old detective and answered:

"I never loved him. I married him because I was lonely, and he was kind to me, and offered me a home. He was not a good man; he was a very weak man, but he was not a bad man. He was given to taking mean little advantages and long chances, and when aroused to get what he wanted he was ruthless. But he was never unkind. I think he really loved me, as much as one man can love a woman who does not love him. We did not have quarrels, if that is what you mean. Our domestic life was peaceful, but cold!"

"Did you never have a quarrel—never a violent quarrel?" persisted Doctor Quest.

For a long silence she remained looking at him.

"Once!" she admitted at last, as if yielding to an inescapable force.

"Recently?"

"To-day!"

The admission came from her in a low tone, devoid of emotion—dry, like a voice from afar, carried on the evening wind.

"Do you mind telling me what the quarrel was about?" asked the detective.

"I found that he had deceived me about a very grave matter—a matter of infinite personal importance to me," she replied, still in that listless monotone. "I could not forgive him for that, and we had rather a scene of it!"

Doctor Quest shuffled some papers meditatively, as if about to show them to Mrs. Harvis. Apparently he thought better of it, and thrust them back.

"Thank you for your frankness," he resumed. "It will help me immeasurably, and I believe will do a great deal of good in a certain quarter which you do not suspect. Meanwhile there are other questions I should like to put to you. Do you know where your husband obtained this mummy?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Harvis, her tone expressing her bewilderment at a question seemingly so unrelated. "He bought it from a

stranded showman, a man who had exhibited it in a traveling medicine show. He bought the whole outfit from him—the patent medicines and everything—very cheaply. That was how he started this patent medicine business."

Doctor Quest permitted himself the luxury of a rude little whistle of surprise.

"Do you know what the mummy was exhibited for?" he asked.

"Why, yes! It was an illusion. You see, it was one of the tent attractions in that cheap little medicine show. It was called 'The Haunted Mummy,' or something like that. I know that my husband once showed me how it was operated. It can be made to talk, or something like that."

Doctor Quest looked over at me. His eyes were expressionless, his face as lacking in revelation as a piece of gray granite. This I knew was a mask. He was forcing himself to conceal the jubilance of his emotion.

He rose very gravely and helped himself to a purple gumdrop.

"I believe," he said between munches, "that we can now discover the entire secret of this devilish contrivance, in which all the mystery of this affair is concealed. But before doing this I wish to acquaint you, Mrs. Harvis, with all—or nearly all—of the facts in this case. I will be brief."

He then described to her all that had really occurred in the office of the Egyptian Balsam and Mixture Corporation. I noticed that he did not tell her Mayland's name or personal history. He merely mentioned that a man who had been intent on killing himself had been interrupted by the appearance of her husband, who had induced him to come to his office. From then on he related in circumstantial detail all that had followed—the call to the police, the whispering of the mummy, and the sudden shot.

"The point involved is a highly material one, you see," he concluded. "I believe that the man lured to this office by your husband was completely innocent. But how are we going to prove it? If he did not kill him, who did? Think of the mesh of circumstantial evidence in which the hapless man is involved! Already a complaint is lodged against him by the police. They had been told by the dead man, ten minutes before his death, that he feared a personal attack from this one man. And when the police get here they find their informant dead with a bullet through his heart, and the man he feared locked in the room with him! Isn't that sufficiently damning? Isn't it, hey?"

Mrs. Harvis was weeping softly, as pathetic and beautiful a spectacle as my sordid eyes have ever looked upon.

"You must clear that man!" she sobbed. "I know he is innocent! You must clear him! You must!"

"I must and I will," declared Doctor Quest, greatly affected by the sight of her tears. "And I am going to start in right now."

He stopped for a moment, as if considering the proper course to pursue. Then he bent over and said:

"If you will do just what I say, I think I can settle this matter in the next five minutes."

She lifted trusting eyes to his.

"I'll do just what you say," she promised.

"Then, Mrs. Harvis, let me present Mr. Larkins." I bowed in acknoledgment of the introduction. "Mr. Larkins is my personal assistant." I blushed at the honor so suddenly and undeservedly bestowed. "If you will just stand beside Mr. Larkins in the doorway there, and ask that gentleman in the blue uniform to step inside, so that he can be a witness of what we are going to do, why, then, I can go right ahead!"

At my request the policeman came in, and the three of us, an oddly assorted trio, stood in the doorway, while the lanky old detective started to work.

He stood beside the swivel chair, his hands on his hips, and began:

"It is my theory that your husband, Mrs. Harvis, killed himself, regardless of the fact that the bullets found in his revolver were unexploded. I think he had deliberately plotted all this out long ago. I call your attention to this."

He bent down and picked up something small that glittered in his long, white fingers.

"This little nickel-plated knob," he said, "fell out of the underneath part of the arm of this swivel chair. It was the nub of a very important piece of mechanism—a mechanism that connected this pulley chair with that mummy. Just be patient and you shall see what I mean!"

He took the little metal knob and deftly inserted it into an aperture, which he found without difficulty under the right arm of the chair. With great care he screwed it tightly into place. Then he seized the arm of the chair.

"By this simple device," he continued, "you will see that what was once a swivel chair is no longer a swivel chair. It won't turn on the swivel any more. See."

He pushed and tugged against it, but the chair remained rigid; he could not budge it.

"Plainly," continued Doctor Quest, "your husband had this done for a purpose, a very sinister purpose, I fear. He did not want the chair to turn, except under certain conditions. Why? The only way in which to answer that question is to find out what happens when the chair is turned. So we will see. But before I do that I must renew my apologies to you, Mrs. Harvis. Before you came in I had solved the secret of this chair. I knew how Mr. Harvis had met his death. But I did not know who was responsible. Knowing what I did know I induced you to sit in this chair. I did that for a reason, which was to see if you fidgeted or were nervous or apprehensive. I mean that I actually suspected you. You quickly showed me, by your entire freedom from anxiety on your own account, that you did not know its deadly secret, which I shall now be pleased to show you."

With a rapid, twirling motion of his fingers he unscrewed the small knob, alowing it to fall to the floor. He then gave the chair a sudden half turn.

The effect was instantaneous.

A whirring, grating noise was heard, and the door of the mummy case swung open. The awful muttering sound which had so frightened us was repeated, and then, with a terrific report, a third shot resounded.

The bullet struck precisely the same spot in the wall which its predecessor had smashed!

CHAPTER EIGHT

INSTANTLY Doctor Quest was apologetic. In his scientific and professional enthusiasm for a demonstration he had overlooked the shocking effect such a surprise might have upon a woman

But Mrs. Harvis was a thoroughbred. She did scream at the shot, but she quickly quieted herself, and assured us that she was perfectly all right. Her courage, I repeat, was amazing. Even the stodgy, stolid patrolman was impressed.

"You see what happened?" resumed Doctor Quest, after a while. "Mr. Harvis at least had the courage of his convictions. He meant to die, that his creditors might be paid. He meant to be found dead, feeling such that the New York police would never discover his mummy trick. In that I think he was well warranted. For you will be surprised to learn that there is no direct contact between the chair and the mummy.

"Instead, the entire device is operated on a wireless electrical principle, which apparently leaves no real connection between the mummy coffin and the chair. The mummy, of course, is a fake. The whispering sound is merely produced by an electric motor operating inside the wooden framework, hidden by all those fake wrappings. It is manufactured on the same principle as the well-known dolls which the illusion manufacturers have used in this device for years. It has been exhibited by countless side-showmen. The door opens, and the record is set in operation merely by establishing a secret electrical contact, in this case supplied by the turn of that swivel chair.

"But even if the police had discovered the trick—which is, I do assure you, knowing them as I do, and regardless of the fact that one of them is present in this room, is exceedingly unlikely—even if they did, how could they prove it was suicide? The theory that some enemy rigged up the whole device would hold as good as the suicide, and the insurance policies would still have to be paid.

"The improvement which Mr. Harvis added to the whole affair was the thing I am now going to show you."

Without speaking any more, Doctor Quest walked directly over to the mummy coffin, which all along I had believed to be the genuine article, and which I was now amazed to learn was only a trapping of a carnival tent, and lifted out the sheeted form.

Laying it prone on the desk, he began unbundling the winding sheets. Yard after yard

he unwrapped, and then exposed the thing that lay within.

It was merely a roughly carved wooden figure, shaped in the human form, with a complicated mechanism of springs, wires and a diagram in the centre. But, affixed by wire just where the neck of a body would be, lashed rigidly in position, was a revolver!"

"There!" said Doctor Quest. "He had calculated its position to a hairline. He knew that when he sat in the chair and turned ever so slightly, once that little knob was removed that shot would unerringly reach his heart. He may have been a weak man, but, Mrs. Harvis, he was a brave man."

CHAPTER NINE

AFTER a little while Doctor Quest sprang his final surprise.

"Will you tell me why you quarreled with your husband this morning?" he asked, coming over and standing beside Mrs. Harvis.

She looked at him queerly.

"You are a very strange man," she faltered. "I think you know."

"I think I do," he confessed. "I think that two years ago he told you that a man you loved was dead."

Her sobs confirmed his words.

"In those papers I was examining there," he continued, "I saw how he had trumped up the evidence which made you believe him. As you told me, when he wanted anything he was ruthless. He wanted you, and he was ruthless in the way he won you. Believing your lover was dead, you married him. And this morning you found out that was a lie?"

"Yes!" she sobbed, rocking in her grief.

"How did you learn it?" he asked.

"He came back—back to look for me," she said between her sobs. "He met an old friend and learned that I was married. And this morning that friend told me. He told me, and I went almost mad with the news. Gerald was there when I heard it. I demanded proof, and the man even told me the address, the rooming house, where my lover was staying. We had a bitter quarrel, Gerald and I. He swore that he would make it up to me. He——"

"Never mind!" said Doctor Quest. "I am afraid he did not mean it. What he meant to say to the man will never be known. I suppose he at first meant to send him to you. Then, when he found that man about to take his life, your husband, in his undoubtedly hysterical sub-normal condition, had a different reaction. He figured out that he could put his murder on that man. Do you understand? Who was that old lover of yours, Mrs. Harvis!"

She looked at him a long moment and then said:

"Bart Mayland!"

CHAPTER TEN

OF course Bart Mayland was acquitted. And of course Doctor Quest was a principal witness at the coroner's inquest which cleared him.

And of course Doctor Quest was the best man at the wedding which took place six months later.

I must tell you a secret about that. I can tell it because I went to the wedding, too. It was in the evening and Doctor Quest was chewing green and red gumdrops all during the ceremony and the vest pockets of his evening clothes were stuffed out prodigiously with them.

And, what is more, he never offered any of them to anybody!

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

Phantom Spectacles In New Mexico

ONE of the weirdest of desert scenes is the mirage, and no more curious stories have been told of them in recent years than by Dean Duke of San Francisco, who, as superintendent of the great Haggin & Heast cattle range in New Mexico, has been much in the saddle during the past few years, and has seen many of them.

He tells of quaint towns beyond the American border being refracted in the skies and made to appear as actually existing on the New Mexico deserts. The towns vary in size, and the domes of churches and of Government buildings, the stores, and all the outlines stand out in clear view. The air is so thin and pure that a real object fifty miles away does not appear to be more than five.

"In riding over the plains I have seen many of these strange mirages of towns of old Mexico," said he. "The spires of the churches, with their white crosses, the adobe buildings, and everything about them are complete. Riding at a distance one takes them for real towns, and it is only after learning that there can be no such cities in the vicinity that he gives up his idea of going to them. Many men have been deceived by them, as they have been by the mirages resembling lakes.

"A few years ago an American named Frank Seybold was journeying from the old town of Juarez, Mexico, to Los Palomas, in New Mexico, with a lot of merchandise. About forty miles south of Deming, in Chihuahua, he saw a beautiful lake and pulled over the plains to get water for himself and team, as both were very thirsty. He drove for quite a distance, and still didn't appear to get any closer. Still, the lake was there before him in such beauty and naturalness that he never thought but it was genuine, and kept on.

"At length, after going several miles and getting no closer, the fact of its being a mirage of the desert dawned on him, and he wheeled his team about to get back. But night came on before he reached the road. He pushed ahead, thinking to reach it any way, and thus got lost and wandered around till he could not reach the road.

"He had therefore to stay where he was, and in the morning he renewed his search. It was no use, however. He could not find it, and after wandering around a good while longer, he unhitched his team, left his goods, and proceeded in the direction he supposed Los Palomas was. It was four days in all before he got back, and in that time he had no water and suffered greatly. It was a wonder he got through at all.

"Another case I know of occurred one summer. A Mexican got lost on the plains, was decejved by the mirages, and went hither and thither in quest of water. Finally he was deceived by this so much, and had gone so long without anything to drink that he became delirious, and whipping out his revolver, shot himself to get rid of his sufferings.

"His hand was unsteady, and instead of inflicting a fatal hurt he shot himself in the leg. He saw the blood oozing from it, and in his crazed condition drank it as it came from the wound. Strange to say, it revived him so that he partially recovered his reason, and at last he got back to where he could get water and be treated. He eventually recovered.

"On the vast, dry plains near the Mexican border one year a great many coyotes went mad because there was no water to drink. In this mad condition they would bite anybody they found. Two Mexican boys were sleeping on the grounds in their blankets one night when a mad coyote attacked and bit both of them. One of the boys afterward died of hydrophobia from the coyote bite, but the other finally got well."

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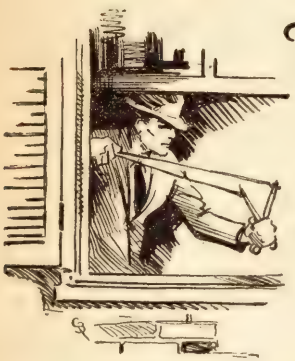

The CROOK'S LAST SHOT

BY

ALBERT CHENICEK

DURGIN, with a last swift glance about the room, softly crept to the door leading to the back yard. "That was a pipe!" he said to himself, an evil grin overspreading his not unhandsome face. "Maybe old Scroggen won't raise a howl to-morrow morning when he lamps the empty safe! He's got it coming to him, the blamed tightwad! Wouldn't let me borrow a hundred dollars, hey? Well, we'll see how he likes having somebody borrow five hundred dollars without leaving an I. O. U."

Durgin paused at the door. He was elated over the easy success of the evening, and he wanted to think of the still greater success coming in the near future. He was in no hurry to leave. Scroggen, as usual, had gone to the movie show, and wasn't due to be back for an hour yet.

"This is going to set me pretty," said Durgin half aloud. "All I've got to do is pretend I've got a job and fool Mae Rooney and then get her to set the date of our marriage for some day this month. Me marrying a cop's daughter!" He laughed lightly. "But it's going to be worth it. She thinks I don't know that her Aunt Mary is going to leave a fortune, but I'm wise. And Aunt Mary is scheduled for a funeral about a month after Mae and I are married. *That's* fixed." His eyes shone greedily. "A hundred thousand bucks! When I get my hands on that Mae is going to have a fine time finding her husband—the man she reformed!"

In his mind's eye he saw what the possession of the money would do for him. He could travel around the world in royal style, visit the far countries where he had nothing to fear from the police, live a life of ease and luxury on some tropical island where indolence was a virtue. He could——

"What the devil!"

The exclamation from his dry lips dispelled the pleasing vision. He shrank back from the door until he touched the opposite wall of the room. Somebody was coming down the gangway between Scroggen's shop and the house next door.

"Scroggen?" he asked himself. "He ain't due yet, but——"

The sound of voices came to him. There were two men. He made out a few words. "Rotten picture—couldn't stand it—some reel—ten years old—you'll enjoy it—no sense in walking around when——"

Scroggen it was sure enough, and then as the other man stepped into a faint patch of light that came from a lamp on the next street, Durgin, through the window, caught a glimpse of a policeman's star.

"A dick!" His hand sought the cold handle of the gun in his pocket. "If they come in here——"

They didn't. Instead they mounted the stairs and Durgin heard the scraping of chairs as the two men sat down on the porch. Durgin swore under his breath.

"I'm in a nice fix! Only one way for me to get out without making a noise and a cop and Scroggen sitting where they can't help but see me the minute I stick my head out. I've *got* to get away or my alibi won't be worth a pound of Russian money!"

He had not exaggerated. In entering Scroggen's clothing store he had forced the door at the rear. It was the only way he could get out now, because if he tried to open the front door, which was carefully protected by several strong locks, the men upstairs would no doubt hear him, and then there was the danger of being seen by some one on the street. All the windows were barred on the outside, so he could not escape in that manner. It was the rear door or nothing.

Durgin paused to ponder the problem. He had to get away, and that within an hour. He cautiously flicked his flashlight on his watch. It was ten-fifteen. He was supposed to be at Jake Mellette's place at eleven to establish his alibi. Jake had said he'd manage to have a couple of cops come in at that time, and they would see Durgin engaged in a game of pool with his friends, as was his usual habit. In that manner suspicion would not fall on Durgin when Scroggen raised a howl over his loss.

"I can't wait for the cop to go," muttered Durgin to himself. "When Scroggen gets to talking he can't be stopped, and unless I'm mistaken he's dug up some booze, which'll keep the cop there until it's all gone—confiscated, the prohibition guys call it.

He moved to the window near the rear door. The murmur of voices floated down to him, but he could not make out the words. For an instant he peered through the darkness, slightly dispelled by the arc lamp on the next street, and noted the rear of the building across the alleyway. That inspiration seized him.

He turned and softly went back into the office where a short time before he had skillfully operated the combination of the safe. With the discreet aid of his pocket lamp he found a number of strong rubber bands on the open desk. Further search disclosed a pair of scissors and a box of thumb tacks.

It was the work of a moment to cut one of the rubber bands and tie each end to the points of the scissors, thereby making a very satisfactory slingshot. Taking the box of thumb tacks with him, he made his way back to the window.

His plan was simple enough. He would open the window and shoot the tacks at the window-panes of the house across the alley. He knew it was a jewelry shop and that the place was protected by a burglar-alarm system that included all the windows, which had silver ribbons on the glass. The distance was not great, and it ought to prove a simple matter to break the glass with the tacks and thereby split one of the ribbons, which would cause the alarm to go off. No doubt the policeman and Scroggen would answer the clanging of the bell and Durgin would be free to leave without danger.

Cautiously he unlatched the window, and then he tentatively pulled upon it. It slid easily and silently, and a second later was wide open.

Now the voices were clearer, and before putting his plan into effect, Durgin paused to listen.

Scroggen was speaking. "A snake! He isn't to be trusted, Rooney, and if I was you I'd be mighty careful about letting him marry Mae."

Rooney! Durgin's head swam. Of all the policemen in the city Mae's father had to be the one with Scroggen at this particular time. And unless he was mistaken he was the subject of the conversation.

"I know," said the policeman as Durgin strained his ears so as not to miss a word. "But he's got her fooled entirely. She's thinking she's reformed him."

"Reformed!" Scroggen jeered. "The only time he'll reform is when he's in jail for life. He fooled me that way once, but I'm wiser now. You know I was a friend of his dad. The time Durgin was released after his first stretch he came to me for some money, said he was going straight and needed a little help. Well, I let him have a hundred dollars, and

two weeks later he was arrested again for housebreaking. And yet he had the nerve to come again yesterday with the same story. Told me I ought to be willing to help the son of my old friend. I refused, and I know that is what Jim Durgin would want me to do if he was here."

Came an interval and the sound of clinking glasses. Then:

"Mae's stubborn, Scroggen. She insists that Durgin is all right, that he hasn't had a chance and that she's making a man of him. The more I say against him the more determined she is to marry him. She's of age, you know, and I can only advise—more's the pity! There's nothing I'd like better than that she should marry your son Pat, but she's all for Durgin."

"Pat's a fine boy, Rooney, and it's a fine husband he'd make for Mae. He's hard working and getting along fast. He's only been in business a year, but he already is making lots of money. You know he's got the jewelry store across the way."

"I know. I like Pat, and I'd be proud to have him in the family, but there's not much of a chance of that happening unless Mae begins to see through Durgin. Hang it, Scroggen, for the last two months I've been hoping every day that he'd be caught stealing and sent up for a good stretch. Then Mae would know how much she'd reformed him. And the worst of it all is that Mae's Aunt Mary is going to leave the girl most of her fortune when she dies, and I'd hate to have Durgin get his hands on the money."

"Quite a fortune, Rooney; I know how you feel."

Once more a pause, and Durgin surmised that more drinks were being consumed. The words he had overheard filled him with malicious delight. So Scroggen wanted Mae to marry Pat! Wise man! He had his eyes on Aunt Mary's money, too! Well, Pat would have to struggle along without the money, for Durgin had that claim all staked out.

Durgin prepared to shoot the first thumb tack. "Without knowing it, Pat is going to help me get Mae and the money," he said to himself. The window he meant to shoot at belonged to Pat Scroggen's jewelry store.

The rubber of his improvised slingshot stretched taut, Durgin waited for a noisy automobile to pass the house. He did not want to shoot when everything was quiet, because if he should fail to break the ribbon the crash of the glass would undoubtedly reach the men above him.

He had not long to wait. He heard a car turn a corner near by, and as the noise increased he took as accurate aim as possible. Then, when the racket was at its loudest, he let fly.

To his expectant ears came a faint tinkle, but that was all. There was no clanging of the burglar-alarm bell. Rooney and Scroggen apparently had not heard the sound, for when everything was quiet Durgin heard them talking as before.

There was another wait before an automobile passed. On his second shot Durgin heard no sound to tell him if he had hit the window. He was swearing silently but eloquently when the approach of another car made him hurry to prepare for another try.

And this time, on the third and last shot, his efforts were rewarded. Suddenly on the night air came the wild outburst of a clanging gong.

Durgin heard the rattle of chairs as the men on the porch sprang to their feet; then Scroggen cried out: "Somebody has broken into Pat's store!"

They came leaping down the stairs and went speeding across the little yard toward the alley. Durgin waited until they were at the gate before he ventured out of the door. Then, grinning at his own craftiness, he stepped lightly into the gangway and started for the street.

But something was wrong. There was a noise in back of him, and he turned sharply to see what it was. He saw figures rushing towards him. "Stop or I shoot!" somebody called. "Rooney!"

Here was something Durgin had not calculated on. He reached for his gun; at the same time there came a flash and a roar, and a bullet whizzed over his head. He fired in return. Again and again he saw the spitting flames, and then his right arm seemed to turn to fire, and he knew he had been hit. His gun fell to the ground. Now his only safety was in flight, and he turned to run to the street. Then his

legs crumpled under him. Rooney had scored again.

Groveling with the pain in his arm and legs, Durgin turned a distorted face to the three men who surrounded him. Rooney had lighted his pocket lamp.

"Durgin!"

"You've got me," said Durgin, and let fly a burning stream of oaths.

"And you're the man who 'reformed'!" said Rooney. "This is going to be mighty interesting to Mae!"

Durgin turned burning eyes on the third man. "Who're you?" he demanded. "Did you crab my get-away?"

"I did that," was the answer, and Durgin saw it was Pat Scroggen. "You see, I happened to be sleeping in the rear of the store tonight because something had gone wrong with the safe, and I thought I'd better protect my stuff until it's fixed. Your first shot broke the glass of one of the windows and woke me up. Then, while I was wondering if I had been dreaming, something hit me in the arm with a burning smack. I felt around among the bedclothes and found a thumb tack. Then I got up and saw that the window had a hole in it, and I knew right away somebody was shooting tacks from this direction. I was just going out of the door to investigate when the alarm went off. Then I met dad and Rooney at the alley gate, and we saw you trying to slip away. Guess you're due for a nice long rest now."

"Call the wagon," said Durgin. "You win."

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REAL LIGHTNING MADE

RECENTLY experiments on the generation and transmission of a current of electricity of 1,000,000 volts were crowned with success. The discharge of this current through the air between needle points six feet apart gave a good imitation of the real lightning, although the voltage in a lightning discharge has been estimated to be fifty times greater, or 50,000,000 volts, according to the eminent electrical engineer, Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz.

The practical value of these experiments does not appear at first glance, perhaps, but it it not limited to imitation lightning on the stage. Electricity is a strange thing to most of us. It is not a substance, like water or coal, but a form of energy.

Electricity is energy. When water falls from a height by the time it reaches the bottom it has gained power to do certain things. If it is caught in buckets and these buckets are fastened to a wheel then the force of the falling water will make that wheel turn, producing power.

The current is transported from place to place through wires. The flow of the current through these wires is very much like the flow of water through pipes. The pressure behind the water causing it to flow along in the pipes corresponds to the voltage in the current. The voltage is what makes the current flow through the wire between two points and the current will flow only when one of these points has a lower voltage than the other.

In the pipe there is a resistance to the flow of the water. This resistance is furnished by the walls of the pipe. In the same way there is a resistance to the flow of the current through the wires. The voltage must always be strong enough to overcome this resistance or else the current will not flow. If the pressure behind the water in the pipe is not strong enough to overcome the resistance of the pipe walls, then when we turn the faucet no water will flow. When we turn the switch no current will flow under the same condition.

The new discoveries which have led to the interesting novelty of man-made lightning have a far greater significance in this connection. If it is possible to perfect means of properly insulating the wires which will carry 1,000,000 volts, then the electricity that is generated at Niagara Falls and the St. Lawrence River can be conveyed possibly to the Rockies or to Florida and used there to turn the wheels of industry.

1,000 Years Before Columbus

THERE was a man in San Francisco who would strip not only Columbus, but even Lief, the Norwegian, of his honors as the only original discoverer of the American continent. He believed that he had indisputable proof that the Chinese monks, inspired by missionary zeal, visited, colonized, and attempted to civilize the western coast of America a thousand years or more before Columbus ever dreamed that he might sail the round world around.

This was the Rev. Frederick J. Masters, superintendent of Chinese Missions of the Pacific Coast, who spent seventeen years—nine in China and eight in this country—in active missionary work among the Chinese. During all that time he had given constant study to the Chinese language and literature, until he was almost as familiar with them as he was with the English. Among the first things in the Chinese literature that interested him was the tradition of their discovery of America, and he studied everything he could find in that tongue bearing upon the subject, comparing with their statements the collateral proofs to be found in this country. The result is that he was thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Chinese claim.

"The Chinese story," said Mr. Masters, "is that about 1,400 years ago—possibly a little more—a party of Chinese Buddhist monks, fired by religious missionary zeal, set out to spread their religion in other lands. This happened at a period, as is shown by the history of the time, when unusual enthusiasm prevailed over the Buddhist religion throughout China. This party of monks—there were five of them—sailed towards the rising sun, and the description of their trips across the Pacific is definite enough to enable one to trace their routes across the ocean. They found a continent, and one at least of them, Lay Sang by name, stayed in that new country forty years, and then returned to his native land, and wrote such a description of the far-away clime, its people and their customs, as plainly shows that it was Mexico he had visited.

"Several trips across the ocean must have been made, and on one of these their vessels must have sailed farther north. The tradition of their visits still remains among the Alaskan Indians, and Chinese coins bearing date previous to the time when the voyages were made have been unearthed upon Alaskan shores.

"It is my opinion that a good many Chinese must have made their way to these shores, for the Indian tribes of this Western coast show so much similarity in appearance, language and customs to the people of that country that it cannot be dismissed as accidental. Take a Chinaman who has worked several years under the burning sun of the interior plains, let his hair grow down around his neck, and wrap a blanket round him, and it is impossible to select him from a group of native Indians. His features and stature are nearly the same, and a summer or two under the hot sun will make his complexion identical. In native stoicism their temperaments are much alike, and there is much similarity between the Chinese language and the tongue of the Digger Indian. The Indian marriage customs, their method of calculation, and certain phases of their religion bear Chinese marks, as if a stronger civilization had attempted to impress itself upon a tribe weaker physically and intellectually, but had only left traces of itself, because its representatives had been comparatively few in number.

"Then the Aztec and Toltec civilizations show unmistakable proofs of Mongolian communication. There is so much in their architecture, their language and their customs—as far as it is possible to determine what these were—that is closely similar to the Chinese that no other hypothesis than this of Chinese colonization of this coast will explain it."

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The Room Without Windows

By LAURA REID MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER FOUR

"THERE is no one here," whispered Sally, reopening the door. When they had gone through the narrow opening, Sally swiftly pulled down the false panel—a silk-framed mirror. Jim stared about in genuine amazement. The big room was gorgeously furnished; the atmosphere was that of the utmost luxury, so costly as to be enervating. But the room had no windows. His feet sank deeply into soft Turkish rugs that permitted no sound to be heard; the walls were a gleaming mass of blue silk fluted to form backgrounds for the full-length gold-framed mirrors. Each of the glasses had long branching candlesticks from side switches, and the rose candles were shaded by heavily fringed shades of fluted satin that made a charming splash of color against the blue walls. Exquisite figures of marble alternated with exotic oil paintings that were attractively illuminated by tall bronze floor lamps. There were no windows in the octagon-shaped apartment as Jim now noticed. He hoped to get some clue to Mrs. Tremaine's personality as he stared at the room, but a feeling of distaste arose as he saw the subjects of the paintings and statuettes. The deep-tufted chairs with high satin arms and the gilded framework of the puffy cushioned couches looked the essence of comfort. But he had no desire to test them. His gaze was now fastened to a dark rusty stain that disfigured the azure satin of the largest couch.

"Where are we?" he whispered.

No one replied. The room was empty. Both women had vanished without betraying the fact. He walked to the end of the room, his feet sinking in the silken pile of the rugs soundlessly. Dozens of mirrors flung back his reflection mockingly as he fingered the branching candle-sticks, hoping to find some hidden spring that would release the door button.

Then he heard a low, mournful wail.

"Dearest, I'm sorry now; oh, if I could only bring you back!"

The tragical tones burst into the perfumed air just as Sally's grizzled head appeared from a hidden door beside a group of the Three Graces done in marble.

Jim hurried to the opening, and entering the second room, saw that it was an ordinary handsomely furnished bedroom, with no hint of the lavish splendor of the room without windows. Just then, however, he did not think of the furniture. His gaze was riveted upon the figure that lay sleeping his last sleep on the four-poster mahogany bed.

The large, well-shaped head crowned with wavy black hair lay peacefully upon the white-linen pillow-case, and a shrouding sheet concealed all but the face. The sheet had been snatched back, and Mrs. Tremaine was showering despairing kisses on the marble features. The man's full lips were slightly parted in a faint, ironical smile, as though he had jested with fate and had come out a game loser. The widow had thrown off her furs, and the tall death candles beside the bed sent beams of yellowish light on her dark frock and golden hair.

There were the sounds of voices, and Sally hurriedly dragged her mistress towards the blue-paneled room.

Jim darted after them, and the door slid down into place. Sally peered through the eye of a dancing girl; then, as there was a smothered sob from the widow, she motioned to Jim to take her place.

"Listen and watch," she whispered, and went to quiet Mrs. Tremaine.

A butler had turned a key in the door leading into the death chamber, and he now entered

slowly with a frightened face. Beside him crept a white-capped parlor maid.

"I heard voices in here," she whispered fearfully.

The butler tried to gain courage by clearing his throat importantly. "You can see there is no one here," he faltered. "I have been sitting just outside the door, as Mr. Woods bade me. He said to admit no one, but that if any woman came to see the corpse to telephone him at once."

"Then," gasped the little maid, "who pulled the sheet off master?"

There was no answer, for they both fled from the room as though the smiling lips had given them some order not to be disobeyed.

Mrs. Tremaine stifled her sobs, and stood listening beside Jim.

"Travers, the butler, was always a coward," she observed contemptuously. Then she fell into silence as the door again opened, and the keen eyes of Woods were seen surveying the room.

"Whoever moved the sheet is still in the room, Barney. Search."

The flat forehead of the black man wrinkled in thought, and his nostrils dilated as though trying to search by smell.

The Central office man knows of this room; the butler does not," whispered Mrs. Tremaine, and she led the way back to the hidden panel leading to the cellars.

"Then that was your husband?" asked Jim as the trio had reached the cellar again.

"Yes, that is my house. I never knew," she sighed, and then went on, "of that hidden room until last night. Then I went mad."

The Central office man had found the sliding panel in the wall.

In the room without windows Woods stood thinking. He held a white-kid glove in his hand. He knew it had not been there when he had helped remove the body of the millionaire the night before.

"Barney, has there been any one in this room recently?"

Again the broad nostrils moved as they contracted and dilated.

"Yes, just now."

"The owner of this glove?"

The black head nodded.

"Yes, sah."

Woods went back to the death chamber and closed the opening.

"What size glove does Mrs. Tremaine wear?" he asked when the widow's maid stood before him.

"Five and three-quarters."

"Does she wear gloves like this?"

Fanny examined the black-stitched kids that fastened on the sides of the wrist with black buttons.

"Yes, sir, she has several pairs like this."

Woods hurried down to the parlor, where he met the lawyer of the murdered man.

"Did you know of that hidden room in the house on Sheridan Drive?" he asked the man.

"No, not until you told me, but Tremaine was always secretive." He stopped, hating to speak ill of the dead.

"Does he own any other property near this house?"

"Yes," returned the lawyer after some thought; "he owns an apartment house around the corner."

Woods nodded, and his sharply clipped lips tightened with satisfaction.

"I thought so."

Barney, who had, as usual, followed him and who was sitting huddled near the door, looked at him significantly.

Woods went up into the suite of rooms on the second floor that had been occupied by the mistress. He found an empty jewel-box on the glass top of the dressing-table. It lay on its side as though the contents had been hastily removed. He held the padded bottom towards Barney.

"Has it the same smell as the glove?"

Barney nodded. The negro had a sense of smell like a bloodhound.

"Then how——" The detective said no more, but continued his study of the room.

Even he could detect the same faint perfume that lingered on all the belongings of the widow. She evidently liked a heavy scent that was not easily forgotten, although it was entirely different from the perfume that was diffused through the air of the room without windows.

There was a large oil painting of Mr. Tremaine on the wall, and opposite hung a companion frame empty.

"Wonder why that was taken out," he mused.

He hunted about through the drawers of silken, perfumed lingerie and stared at the yellow-silk negligees and kimonos. Like the hangings of the room, the prevailing tone was yellow, from deepest gold to the pale tints of a faint rose the colors ran.

"Must have tried to match her hair with her clothes," he thought, wondering at the extravagance of wealthy women. The highly polished floor of black oak was strewn with wonderful Oriental rugs, and several fine tiger skins were stretched out with the heads mounted. Beside the high, canopied bed there were two steps leading up to the dais, and upon each of these lay a lion skin with watchful, gleaming topaz eyes. Directly beside the hanging bed-cover of yellow satin rested a huge eiderdown pillow of oblong shape covered with softest yellow fur.

"That's what she steps out upon," the bloodhound of the law sighed involuntarily as he thought of the dimpled white feet that must shortly take the path to the electric chair, and he kicked savagely at the pair of black-velvet mules resting on their incredibly high heels beside the bedside cushion. "I hate to track down a woman, but she must have been a fiend to stab a man like that, and yet——" The jaw closed determinedly.

He was no stripling to be turned from his hunt because of the helpless appeal of a pair of tiny slippers. He next searched the closets and emerged with his head swirling from the clouds of perfume that clung to the dainty lacy garments depending from their beribboned hangers.

Suddenly he turned on his heel. "Come on," he barked, and Barney, who had nearly dozed in the overheated atmosphere, started and followed the energetic figure downstairs.

In the silent study Woods strode over to the writing-table in the centre of the room. The framed photographs apparently told him nothing, for he stood looking with brooding eyes. Presently he idly picked up a paper-weight, and Barney heard him swear softly. The bulging eyes of the darky remained glued to his master's face, for when he heard that sound it meant much the same as the deep-toned bay of a bloodhound when he catches the scent.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE evening papers had pictures of the principals in the Sheridan Drive tragedy. The widow's beautiful face smiled out at the rabid readers from the right of her murdered husband. Jim Denton read the past of the handsome club man. It was dragged out pitilessly for the amusement of thrill-hunting readers. Details of wild nights at road houses, of abandoned companions who occupied boxes at notorious theatres, and who rioted at various cafés, were given. The name of the beautiful model who rode a pony up the steps of the café while clothed only in a revealing mass of veiling was blazoned forth in black captions, and her picture published on the left of the murdered man rivaled the widow's in beauty.

"It was popularly supposed that since his ardent woing and marriage to the convent-bred girl Tremaine had reformed," said the article. "To outside appearances he led a decorous life in his palatial home, whose handsome grounds ended in the waters of the lake. To his intimates, however, the truth was well known. Tremaine had tired of the girl-bride before the first year had passed, and the existence of the exotic inner room, 'the room without windows,' had been shared by several of his men friends. The lovely mistress of the house, however, had been totally unaware of the place. This Tremaine's cronies insisted, for they had known of her telephone calls to his clubs when she had waited hours for him to return. And all the time he was in the blue-paneled room in the rear that was concealed by the heavy stonework that was apparently mere ornament. How she discovered the room on that fatal night is yet unknown," so continued the report, "but the door stood open to Tremaine's bedroom while he lay in the inner room with a knife in his breast. The shrieks of the widow had roused the servants, who supposed some assassin had done the deed, but she had admitted the killing."

Jim dropped the paper. There seemed no possible chance that she might be the victim of circumstantial evidence. Without any accusation she admitted the crime. He sighed deeply and resumed reading: "And the widow said she had been driven crazy by his neglect.

Of the presumed rival she had as yet made no mention. It is scarcely possible that she discovered her husband in the room alone and killed him.

"The murderess made her escape in the confusion incident upon the murder. An eye-witness said a stranger took her in his car and speeded south. Ambrose Woods, the Central office detective who is invariably accompanied by his black shadow, Barney, gave chase and tracked them to a hut far out south, where the stranger left her, and returned to the city. Woods took her back and put her safely in the matron's care at the jail." Here the paper dropped to the floor. He was puzzled to know how she got out of jail.

"He doesn't know yet that she is out," he muttered. "They would scarcely let her out on bail, and yet she couldn't escape from jail. Wonder if I could get permission to go to her cell?" he pondered deeply. "No, I'd better not draw any attention to her absence. If Woods doesn't know yet, so much the better. She was almost justified in killing her husband and yet——" Through the love that had sprung up so incredibly in a few hours ran the bitter, unavailing regret for her crime. He loved a woman with blood-stained hands—one who could smile one moment, and another instant was weeping wildly and calling out for the man she had killed. Even if she could be freed it would only be on an insanity plea. Jim's head dropped on his arms. He who had always scoffed at love had now found the stark reality of the emotion commonly laughed at, and he found the savor of it bitter. He had given Mrs. Tremaine his telephone number and had told her to call him if he could be of any service to her.

She had said good-by to him at the door of the third-floor apartment, with Sally's frightened face looking over her shoulder at him. He recalled to mind that Sally wished to get her safely inside the locked door, but the widow was in such an emotional state that she was hardly conscious of her peril.

"I want to see him again before they"—a storm of sobs intervened—"put him in the casket."

"Come." Sally had put an imperative arm about the woman and had half-dragged her inside.

"If she insists upon going there again, will you telephone me?" Jim had whispered. "It isn't safe for you two women to go alone."

Sally's dreary eyes met his fully, and then she nodded.

"Even if she could be freed she doesn't care for me, not a jot," Denton ruminated, and then to show his conviction that love amounted to nothing, he pulled out the tiny blue-satin bow that he had found in the hut and kissed it.

The tinkle of the telephone aroused him from his profitless musings.

"She is bound to go back to that room and take him some flowers. Will you come?" came the thin voice of Sally over the wire in hushed, tragic accents.

"Yes, wait there for me," and he rushed out.

In the street he almost ran down Doctor Fleming.

"Come along with me, I may need you," he cried, and the doctor followed him into the taxi he had signaled.

"I want you to wait in the taxi outside the house on Sheridan Road," said Jim, after he had explained hurriedly. "I have a feeling that something is going to happen and——"

"But she says herself she killed him," expostulated the physician; "why mix up in such an affair?"

"Because I love her," cried Denton, throwing all discretion to the winds; "I'm going to help her some way."

"But you say she's downtown in jail? How can she be running through underground passageways?"

Jim's eyes flashed.

"I don't know, but I'm going to help her. That's all," he finished.

"And quite enough, I think," responded his friend.

Mrs. Tremaine and Sally were ready and the widow filled Jim's arms with long boxes of flowers that Sally had gone out and bought for her. The scent of the tuberoses came out heavily from the boxes, and the young detective wondered if any lover had ever had so unpleasant a trip. He stumbled along over the rough passageway, and Sally, as before, went ahead with the dim light.

The room without windows was empty and

still. The perfumed air was fragrantly warm, and Denton, struck by a sudden idea, turned to Mrs. Tremaine.

"If the servants knew nothing of this room, who cared for it? How was it heated?" he demanded of Sally.

"The hot-water pipes run in here from the plant downstairs. Mr. Tremaine had some men from abroad who connected them. He would spend any amount of money for a whim. As to caring for the room, I do that. You see, I have charge of that apartment building around the corner and," a deep flush overspread the sallow, lined face, "I had to——"

Mrs. Tremaine had been feverishly opening the flower-boxes and tossing out the wax tissue-papers.

"There, that will be enough——" She jumped to her feet, and with her arms filled with flowers started for the next room.

"Wait until we are sure that there is no one there. It seems odd that no one is watching," expostulated Jim.

The woman looked at him oddly. "It doesn't matter. I want him to have his flowers."

CHAPTER SIX

THE bedroom was empty save for the eternal sleeper, and Jim released the spring that opened the door. The widow slipped through and again pulled down the sheet that Travers, the butler, had timidly replaced. She arranged the flowers, and then wildly kissed the full, smiling mouth.

Denton turned away. It was more than he could stand. Sally looked at him and touched her forehead significantly.

"She's had enough to unsettle her," she whispered, "and I'm afraid——"

He stared back at her. The servant's words carried no conviction to his mind. He felt that she was shrewdly preparing the defense.

The room was very still; no sound from the household penetrated the heavy walls. Mrs. Tremaine had slipped to her knees and the other two stood waiting. There was a stir in the hall beyond, then the door was opened.

"Will you kindly step out here?"

The curt tones of Woods fell like thunder on their ears. The widow alone was oblivious. Woods held the door open and looked suggestively at Jim.

"Come," said the young man, and touched her gently.

Travers and the parlor maid hovered in the background, and the ladies' maid wept outright as Mrs. Tremaine went out into the great hall.

"I have a taxi waiting," said Woods, "and without a word she followed him.

Barney stood waiting at the foot of the gray-stone stairs, and Jim noted distastefully how his nose twitched as the faint perfume from the furs reached him.

Denton helped her in carefully, and then turned to the detective.

"May I go down to the——" He could not bring himself to mention the word "jail."

Woods looked at him not unkindly. Indeed there was a triumph in his cold manner that almost softened his determined mien.

"Yes, you may come in also, if you desire. I know you, Denton—a private detective. You meant well enough, but you should have known I'd get her in the end."

Doctor Fleming, waiting in the taxi, followed them. As he saw the sumptuous furs of the woman he guessed that she must be Mrs. Tremaine, and he knew that she had been arrested.

"Although I don't know what else she could expect," he thought, "hanging around the scene of her crime after she had once gotten safely away."

When they were down at the jail Woods led the way to a quiet waiting room. "I'll admit that I made a mistake, but I guess I have it all straight now," he said as he fixed his keen gray eyes full on the wax-white face of the widow; "why did you not make your escape when you had the chance?"

She sighed wearily.

"Why should I? I have confessed. Do with me as you please. I loved him and I killed him."

"But why? Why did you kill him?"

The long brown eyes deepened and darkened, but she remained silent.

Just then Sally took her courage in her hands and cried out:

"She stood all any mortal woman could stand and keep her reason. I knew of his goings on, but he had me in his power. My son forged Tremaine's name to a check, and the boss held that over me. I did his bidding or my boy would have gone to prison. So I obeyed him, and when his guests went down that hidden passage to the room without windows I showed them the way and kept my mouth shut. Mr. Tremaine was liberal with his money, but he was hard. We all obeyed him. The scenes in that room were terrible. I"—she put up a trembling hand to her eyes, as though to shut out bad visions—"had to serve the wines and suppers, and the poor wife waiting upstairs in her beautful rooms, wondering why he did not return. Then," she turned to the detective who was listening intently, "came the night when he committed his last great crime. He told me that my mistress expected a young lady guest. 'Sally,' he said, 'you're to wait here in the hall, and when the girl comes up the steps, you will open the door and show her into my room. Mrs. Tremaine will be downtown, and the servants will be downstairs at their dinner. Now, mind you, make no mistake.' That was all he said, but of course I had my own thoughts about the matter. He had so many queer guests that I had ceased to wonder, but it seemed strange to me that this one was to come into his own house, I mean through his own front door. But I knew my place, and I slipped through the hidden passage and out through his bedroom and waited in the hall. When a taxi stopped and a figure came up, I opened the door and ushered her into the bedroom. Then through into the inner room." Sally stopped and looked into the absorbed faces of her listeners. "Mr. Tremaine was waiting in the inner room, and when I came in behind the girl he gave me an ugly look and said: 'Now, beat it out of here. If I want you I'll ring.' The girl, evidently surprised at her strange reception, lifted her veil and turned to look at me. Mr. Tremaine actually pushed me towards the panel that he had already opened, but as I turned back I saw"—she brushed her eyes with the same gesture she had used previously —"that the strange guest was Mrs. Tremaine's own twin sister, the young girl who had just finished her schooling at the convent. I tried to push back into the panel, but he was too quick for me."

"Well?" prodded Woods, "and then?"

"I ran back under the damp rafters; the place had never seemed so evil and repulsive to me. I did not know where Mrs. Tremaine was, and I telephoned her maid as soon as I got back to the flat. The girl said that she had gone down to the train to meet her sister. I told her to have her call me as soon as she got in. She called me about twelve o'clock, and I asked her to come to the flat. She was greatly surprised, but she came, and I—told her. Right then she nearly went mad, and grasping a knife, she told me to take her through the passage. I explained that he wouldn't let us in, but she insisted, and I took her. When we got there we heard the boss humming to himself. Presently, as we stood listening we heard him say: 'Here is the maid now, Vivienne. I hear her coming in the hall. If you'll drink this it will waken you up so we can all talk.' We heard Vivienne laugh sleepily and then the clink of glasses. Mrs. Tremaine put her hand on the button and slid open the panel just as her sister screamed. We ran in to find her in his arms. The lace of the negligee she had slipped into was torn to pieces. He grew angry at her struggles to escape his kisses. She had evidently lain down on the bed to wait the coming of her sister, as he had given her drugged wine, and we arrived just as he attacked her."

Woods looked at Sally keenly.

"Your story fits in very well with my deductions. I guess the case is complete."

As he spoke he removed a screen that had been placed across the corner of the room.

Jim stood wondering if Mrs. Tremaine would be freed on the insanity plea. He looked over absently. Then he stared over with incredulous eyes. There, still weak and frightened but conscious, lay the girl in the white lace negligee.

"You see"—Woods was plainly pleased, and the face of Barney wore a broad smile—"I at first thought this Vivienne was Mrs. Tremaine. Then, when I noticed that all the hangings in the upper bedroom were yellow, I wondered, for blue or pink would have been more becoming to"—he stopped and pulled out the paper-weight he had taken from the li-

brary—"the girl I had arrested had bright blue eyes, while the eyes of the widow were dark brown. Right then I guessed at the existence of twins."

Lucy Tremaine had thrown herself on the bed and was wildly kissing the fragile face.

"Vivienne, darling," she cried, "you are safe!"

"I suppose Miss Vivienne can be taken away now," suggested Denton, devouring the dainty face with happy eyes; "there is no accusation against her."

"I have arranged bail for Mrs. Tremaine," said a new voice, and the widow turned to see her lawyer; "they can both return to the house. Mr. Woods will accompany them and be responsible."

Jim, bending over the young girl, looked deeply into the frank blue eyes that were shadowed by the gold-tipped lashes.

"I told you," he said gaily as he rejoined his friend, the doctor, "that she was a blonde, and a blue-eyed blonde at that. Fleming, will you prescribe a long drive for her to-morrow? The widow is going to get out of this mess, and I want to look out for her sister."

The end

A NEW SERIAL
BEGINS IN OUR NEXT ISSUE
Watch for
THE BLACK DIAMOND
By JACK J. GOTTLIEB
It's a detective story of deep mystery
DON'T FAIL TO READ IT

A FLAPPER GHOST

THERE is a lot of talk going on in Millerton, N. Y., about the flapper ghost which for some time now has been visiting the home of Theron Snyder at night and peering into a second-story window. Mr. Snyder professes only a nodding acquaintance with the ghost, but says that so far as he has been able to see it through the glass it has bobbed hair and is addicted to the use of eyebrow pencils and lipsticks. Also it is pretty.

Mr. Snyder is middle-aged, the father of a family and an employee of the Central New England Railroad. He takes no stock in ghosts and has no time for them; neither does he take stock in or have time for flappers in the flesh. But the fact remains that almost every night there is a tapping, as of some one gently rapping on the glass of a second-story window, and then through the glass can be dimly seen the head of a flapper, flapping about without much very visible means of support as are shown by the flapper in life.

Every effort has been made to solve the mystery, but to no avail. It has been suggested that perhaps Mary Ellen has come down from Antigonish on a visit, but there are no signs of human footprints on the ground under the window, and nothing to indicate that the flapper climbed up a ladder and peeked into Mr. Snyder's window. Investigations are being made by all the amateur ghost hunters of this vicinity, and it is these investigations that are causing the talk.

Some of these investigators are very young men and they seem to be trying to steal Mr. Snyder's ghost rather than solve the mystery.

Two are known to have placed a box of bonbons on their window sills at night and lingered hopefully within their rooms, dressed in their Sunday suits, but to no avail. A third put a small bottle of gin on the window sill, but even this did not attract the flapper ghost, which remains true to the household of Mr. Snyder.

Several members of the Snyder family have seen the face with its pert bobbed hair peeking in at the window. They have tried to catch it, but have failed. They have not, however, accepted the offer of certain of the young amateur investigators, who volunteer to catch the flapper ghost or die in the attempt. The ghost, so far, however, has done nothing to the different members of the Snyder family but look at them.

The MAN WITH THE CRUTCH

BY

FREDERIC W. JOHNSTON

IT began on a warm September day in Hoffman's Grill. Meade was just paying his lunch check at the desk when his ear caught the low voice of a woman speaking about him on the other side of the room.

"That's Mr. Mulwhinny over there. He's the little cutie that's got the whole town guessing."

His curiosity piqued, Meade allowed his eyes to stray carelessly about the room, and thus discovered that the speaker was a blonde waitress bending confidentially over a table next to the wall. At the table sat a small, pale, black-bearded man whom Meade, so far as he knew, had never seen before, with a crutch leaning against the chair by his side. The dull eyes of the latter were fixed on Meade in an ill-humored stare.

"What did you say his name was?" Meade heard him ask after a moment's pause.

"Mulwhinny. At least that's the name he goes by."

"Oh, it is, is it?" was the sardonic reply. Then the chair creaked as the cripple turned and began giving his order for lunch.

On starting homeward Meade discovered that the incident had left him with an uneasy feeling that something was wrong, though he couldn't exactly tell why. There was nothing surprising in what the waitress had said. As a matter of fact he *did* call himself Mulwhinny, and he *had* got the whole town guessing so far as he could. And his reasons for doing this weren't quite so fantastic as might have been supposed. Up to within a month or so his whole life had been spent among people who knew everything about him—what his income was, and how many cars he had, and when he would start for Palm Beach or Newport, and what he would do, say, eat and wear when he got there. And after twenty-five years of this sort of thing it had occurred to him one day how nice it would be to live for a while among people who knew nothing about him and to whom he might appear, therefore, not as a commonplace young man living a cut-and-dried existence, but as an interesting stranger whose whole life was shrouded in mystery. And this notion had so tickled his fancy that he had started carrying it out without an hour's delay. Hence the trip to Belmont, where, having taken a room under the name of Mulwhinny, he was spending his days doing everything he could think of to mystify the natives and having generally the time of his young life.

Thus on one day he would send a cablegram in a fake cipher to an imaginary person in Calcutta, or ship a sample of gravel taken from some vacant lot to a non-existent assay office in New York, while the next would find him poring diligently over the back files of the Bel-

mont *Herald* and taking cryptic notes of what he found. And every night regularly he left his room at Mrs. Trowbridge's at precisely eighteen minutes past ten, to return at exactly twenty-four minutes of twelve. As a rule, the interval was spent over a quiet cigar in a small, deserted, one-room house called Higgins's Place on the West Belmont road. But of course the townspeople knew nothing about that, and very naturally spent a good deal of their time trying to make out whether he was a detective, a prospector, or just a plain nut. Under the circumstances, therefore, he could hardly blame a poor waitress for indulging in a little harmless gossip at his expense, and hence was forced to conclude that his uneasiness had been caused by the unaccountable way in which the lame man had acted at the mention of his name.

Late that night fate handed him another little one, right on the beezer. On getting home from his regular visit to Higgins's Place he noticed that the air was faintly redolent of cheap tobacco. Some one had been in his room. At first he was inclined to be rather peeved at this, but on second thought he decided not to let it worry him any. There wasn't anything there worth stealing, and anyway he couldn't very well look over his things at that time of night. So it was not till next morning after breakfast that he noticed his pile of handkerchiefs had been disturbed by a none too cleanly hand and that a plaid cap which he particularly fancied was missing. At this discovery his wrath boiled over, and he was just saying what he thought of a crook who was cheap enough to steal handkerchiefs when suddenly there came a knock on the door and some one called out that he was wanted on the telephone.

"Hello," he said a moment later as he took up the receiver. "This is Mr. Mulwhinny."

"Oh, it is, is it?" was the mocking reply. "This is Miss Hohenzollern. Miss Minna Hohenzollern."

"Ah, so it is." Meade was in his element now. "I thought I recognized the voice. Have you heard from your Uncle William lately?"

A laugh that was like quicksilver came over the wire. "Yes, indeed I have. And the way they're treating him is a perfect shame. But what I wanted to say was that somebody broke into Mrs. Dalton's house at about eleven o'clock last night and went off with a ten-thousand-dollar string of pearls and a diamond pendant."

"Dear me. Quite a haul."

"Yes, wasn't it? But that's not the worst. When the police got there this morning and started hunting for clues they found a handkerchief"—here Meade's hair began to stand straight up on his head—"with an old English M in the corner and a plaid cap with the initials G. B. M. pasted on the lining. So they're on the way to your house now to find out what you know about it. Of course, if you can prove where you were last night at eleven there won't be any trouble. But if you can't"—here the tone was very sweet—"there may be some temporary inconvenience. They ought to be getting there about now. Good-by."

Meade was so utterly dazed by the suddenness of this that for the moment he could only stand by the telephone staring open-mouthed into space. Then, moved by a vague feeling that he needed air, he passed out by a side door into the yard. This, as it turned out, was the most sensible thing he could have done. For before he had taken a dozen steps the front gate clicked open and two policemen hurried in.

"There he is now." one of them shouted. "Stop, you, or I'll shoot."

Meade didn't wait to hear more. In three jumps he reached the back fence, and in another moment had vaulted over it a scant hair's breadth in advance of a bullet that clipped a neat groove in the topmost plank. For an instant his eye traveled up and down the alley into which his unlucky star had brought him. Then, running for all he was worth, he sped down the alley to the street and down the street to the river where his boat was. Of the two policemen one was old and the other fat, so that Meade reached the river well in advance and, having crossed the narrow stream, was just taking cover in the woods on the farther side when a second bullet zipped past his right ear. In another moment, however, he was hidden by the trees, and was able to stop and get his breath while he peered at the enemy through the leaves.

The latter were evidently in no great doubt as to what to do next. For, after a gruff word

or two, they moved off downstream in the direction of the nearest telephone and the nearest bridge, while Meade started cautiously upstream through the woods, to emerge, twenty minutes later, at a place on the river bank where there were no houses in sight. Here he quickly undressed, and putting his clothes on a hastily constructed raft, pushed it before him as he swam across.

The process of dressing again took several minutes that he could hardly spare, but he was soon on his way once more and, creeping stealthily through woods and across pastures, came at last to the cheerless security of Higgins's Place. Here he proposed to hide till night had fallen and then, if fate was kind, to make his escape in the darkness. But the prospect of a day in an empty house with nothing to eat isn't precisely exhilarating. And as all three of the windows were boarded up, there was nothing for him to do but to light the lamp which he had provided for his nightly vigils and, sitting on a rickety old horsehair sofa that Higgins had left behind, to spend the hours brooding over the awful mess he had got himself into.

Of one thing he was absolutely certain. He would go to prison and rot there rather than tell the police who he was. The mere thought of what he would have to face if the story leaked out—the chuckle-headed laughter from every idiot in the club, the sardonic headlines in the newspapers, "New York Society Man Gets His. George Bennington Meade Tries Cuisine and Appointments of Village Hoosgow"—brought beads of cold sweat to his forehead.

As the day wore on his imagination kept filling in the picture with fresh horrors, so that by nightfall his nerves were worn almost to a frazzle, and he breathed a profound sigh of relief when a glance through a chink in one of the windows told him that it was dark enough to start. But then, just as he was going to blow out the light, a quick step sounded on the gravel outside, the door opened and a girl with violet-gray eyes and long dark lashes came in.

"Oh, hello," she said in a friendly tone. "I thought I'd find you here."

For a moment Meade stared. Then the sound of her voice woke an echo in his brain, and he exclaimed: "Why, it's Miss Hohenzollern!"

"The same," said the owner of the eyelashes with a mocking inclination of the head.

Meade's blue eyes rested thoughtfully upon her. "Aren't you the young lady that lives in that big stone house on the corner just below Mrs. Trowbridge's?"

"How did you ever guess?" she laughed back, this time with a very distracting display of dimples. "I didn't suppose you would deign to notice a poor little village girl like me." She began to untie a paper parcel she carried. "Here are some sandwiches I've brought you. Please begin eating at once. We've no time to waste."

At sight of the food Meade suddenly realized how famished he was.

"Golly!" he exclaimed as he bit into a sandwich. "This comes just in the nick of time. Ten minutes more and I'd have gone to join MacSwiney. Talk about manna in the desert!"

During the next few minutes he was too busy to say more. But at last, after several sandwiches had disappeared, he paused long enough to ask whether she was in the habit of furnishing refreshments to people who were hiding from the police.

"Of course not," she told him.

"Then why, if I may ask——"

"Oh, I don't know. I suppose it's because father told me I mustn't have anything to do with you," was the final reply. "Father's a pillar of the church, you know."

"Then I gather that he didn't exactly—er—insist on your bringing me these sandwiches."

"Not so you'd notice it. At the present moment I'm supposed to be in my room with a bad headache. I had to climb down the lattice to get out. Say, you're not really a thief, are you?"

"Of course not," he told her. "I haven't done anything but pull off a few harmless stunts just to give people something to talk about. I suppose some crook saw what a chance that gave him to break into Mrs. Dalton's and put the blame on me. I knew when I got home last night that some one had been in my room. He must have taken the cap and handkerchief then."

"That *was* clever of him, wasn't it?" she said in the tone of one to whom a well-planned

burglary is a never-failing source of delight. "When you've finished eating," she added, "I think we'd better go over to Mrs. Dalton's and see if we can't find some clues. She told me what happened, so I phoned it to you."

He stopped in the middle of a bite to stare at her. "Mrs. Dalton's!"

"Uh-huh. You see, when you ran off so suddenly this morning they searched your room and found Mrs. Dalton's pendant hidden in the mattress. But the string of pearls is still missing. So Cy Slocum—that's the chief of police—has spent the whole day trying to pin the crime on you, he told me. That puts it up to us—don't you think?—to prove that somebody else did it."

"But we'd be sure to be caught."

"I don't see why. Mrs. Dalton's cook goes to bed with the chickens. Her maid is at the movies with our gardener. And as for Mrs. Dalton herself, I sent her a telegram this afternoon reading: 'Am very ill. Come at once. Mother.' So she took the five o'clock train for Miller's Falls."

At this he threw back his head and laughed.

"Say——" he began.

But just then there came the sound of a car stopping before the house.

"Sh," whispered the girl. "That's probably Cy now. We'll have to run."

With Meade at her heels she darted out the back door and across the yard to the woods beyond. But before they had quite reached the latter a great roaring voice sounded in the darkness behind them:

"Oh, there you are! I'll get you this time, you crook."

Then a shot rang out and a bullet clipped the leaves above their heads. It was evident that the chief had a bad habit of aiming too high.

"Isn't this fun," the girl whispered a moment later as they stopped for an instant among the trees. "I wouldn't have missed it for a farm. Come. I know the paths hereabouts, and he doesn't. We'll lose him."

It proved a true saying. Hardly had they gone a hundred yards when the silence about them proclaimed that the policeman had given up the chase. Then, as they stood listening, the faint rumbling of an engine reached their ears.

"Do you hear that?" said the girl. "That's Cy's flivver. We can go back now if you like and start for Mrs. Dalton's."

Cautiously retracing their steps, they soon came out under the stars, and a half-hour later were wriggling silently through Mrs. Dalton's pantry window.

"You see," whispered the girl as they tiptoed through the dark hall into the equally dark library, "there's no one here."

But before the words were fairly out of her mouth a heavy step sounded on the stairs and Meade suddenly found himself being pushed behind some heavy window curtains, while a faint sound that followed told him that the girl had chosen a similar hiding-place on the other side of the room. Then the lights were switched on and, looking through a chink, Meade saw a tall, lank, gray-bearded policeman standing near the door.

"I heard you," proclaimed the latter in clarion tones. "So you might as well come out, wherever you are. You can't fool Cy Slocum. Ask anybody in town if you can." His roving eye fell upon the curtain behind which Meade's heart was doing a hundred and twenty beats to the minute. "I'll bet a nickel you're right in there," he declared and came forward. But just as his hand was raised to draw the curtain aside a rollicking laugh sounded behind him and, wheeling suddenly around, he found himself staring into the dancing eyes of Miss Hohenzollern.

"Why, Elsie Thayer," he roared, "what you doing here?"

"Thought I was a burglar, didn't you, Cy?" she teased. "That's a good one on you." She came a step closer. "Cy," she whispered, "I came to tell you something that I think you ought to know. I was passing Tobit Cobb's about half an hour ago, and I'm sure I saw Mr. Mulwhinny sneaking in there by the side door. There was a car coming around the bend just then, and for a minute the lights struck him full in the face. Tobit's visiting his sister in Pomfret, you know, so there's nobody at home there now."

"Did Mulwhinny have a woman with him?"

"Yes."

"What sort of a woman?"

"Oh, a brazen-looking hussy. Just the sort

of creature you'd expect to see with a man like Mulwhinny."

The chief lapped it up.

"Guess I'll have to take a look into that. You don't catch Cy Slocum missing any chances. Like to go along? I can drop you at your house."

"No, thanks. I want to step across the street to Mrs. Peaseley's before I go home."

They went out together, leaving Meade in the dark. Then there came the sound of a flivver starting, and a moment later the girl was back again switching on the lights.

"Where do you expect to go when you die?" asked Meade sternly as he came forward to meet her.

"Now please don't preach," she pleaded. "I get plenty of that at home. And, anyhow, there isn't time. Cy won't be gone for more than half an hour, and we've got heaps to do. Just take a look around, won't you, and see if you can find any clues."

She began going over the room exactly like a detective, and Meade tried to do the same. But after a few perfunctory efforts he gave it up. Whatever his success might be as a man of mystery, he was a dismal failure as a sleuth. At the end of ten laborious minutes, most of which had been spent on her hands and knees, the girl arose, flushed and perspiring, to find him staring down at the open safe.

"Well," she asked, "did you find anything?"

"No," he replied. "I was just thinking how this reminded me of a burglary we had at our house about five years ago."

She was all interest at once. "Tell me," she demanded.

"There's nothing much to tell. I came home very late one night and found a burglar working at the safe. He saw me, and was going to shoot, but I got my gun out first and potted him in the knee. Then I sent for the police."

"Was he badly hurt?"

"I'm afraid so. His lawyer said at the trial that he was crippled for life."

"And what was his name?"

"Whose, the burglar's? Slick Magee."

"Hm. He'd try to get even with you for that if he could."

"I suppose so."

"Of course he would. Come." She led the way across the room and, pointing to a circular smudge on the hardwood floor, asked: "What do you make of that?"

"Why, if you ask me, it looks like the mark a cane-tip would make."

"No. It's too large for that."

His eyes twinkled as he caught her drift. "Very well, a crutch-tip then."

"That's better." She gave him an approving smile. "Yes, Mr. Whatever-your-name-is——"

"Meade," he told her.

"Thanks. So pleased to meet you. Yes, Mr. Meade, I'd be willing to bet my best hat that it was a cripple who took those pearls. And what's more to the point, it was one who's got some deep grudge against you."

But Meade was far from convinced. "I concede the cripple," he said. "But I don't see where that grudge stuff comes in. Any crook would have taken the cap and left it here when he robbed the safe."

"I know," she rejoined. "But nobody who didn't positively loathe you would throw away a perfectly good diamond pendant just to get you into trouble with the police. Why, what's the matter? Have you thought of something?"

"Thought of something!" he exclaimed. "Listen." And he told her the incident in Hoffman's Grill.

"Good. That settles it. Slick Magee with a beard. No wonder you didn't recognize him. And now you'd better call up the Western Union and send a telegram to the chief of police in New York. That's where Magee will have gone."

"A telegram? How nice!" was the ironical reply. "And will you kindly tell me what name I'm to have them sign to this telegram?"

The violet-gray eyes grew round with surprise. "Why, Cy Slocum's, of course."

At this he threw up his hands. "You win," he said. "Where's the telephone? Also," he added, after following her out into the hall where the phone was, "what's the operator's name?"

"Albert Slade. You'd better call him Al."

"Al it is," he told her. Then he gave the number and after a moment roared: "Is that you, Al? This is Cy Slocum speaking. Guess you don't have to be told who Cy Slocum is."

"No, I don't," was the weary reply. "And

you don't have to bust the phone either. There's nothing wrong with my hearing."

"Isn't there?" Meade bellowed. "Then take this: 'Chief of Police, New York City. Have reason to believe robbery here last night was work of ex-convict known as Slick Magee. Please arrest Magee at once if you can and let me know if you find evidence to support theory of guilt. Signed, Cyrus Slocum, Chief of Police, Belmont.'"

"That went over strong, didn't it?" said the girl as he hung up. "Now I'm going to take you home with me and hide you in the attic. Oh, you needn't stare. You wouldn't be safe anywhere else. And, besides, it's so delicious to think of father spending the night under the same roof with a man who is wanted by the police." A happy little sigh escaped her. "I'm having such a good time," she said. "It seems a pity it'll be all over in a day or two."

This was a little bit too much for Meade's nerves. "Look here, Miss Thayer," he began.

"I'm looking."

But he refused to smile. "You seem to forget," he told her, "that if anything goes wrong I'll be spending the next three or four years in Sing Sing."

"That's nothing," she retorted. "I've already spent nineteen years in Belmont."

He gave it up.

It was a bit later, when they were walking along the star-lit road, that a sudden impulse prompted him to take her hand.

"What's the matter?" she asked after a little pause. "Are you afraid?"

"Yes," was the solemn reply.

"Very well then." And she let him keep it.

Afterwards, as they stood beneath her window, another impulse made him reach out and clasp her in his arms.

"Still frightened?" she whispered.

"Scared to death," he replied. Then his lips found hers in the darkness, and for a long moment he forgot that there was such a thing as a policeman in the world.

"So that's that," she said, gently drawing away from him. "Now I'll go up the lattice, and when I get there you must follow."

"Will it hold?"

"Yes. I bribed Ned Hulker—that's the carpenter—to make it out of oak on purpose."

Three minutes later they faced each other in Elsie's room. "Now," she commanded, "take off your shoes and I'll show you the way upstairs."

Meade obeyed. And when the town clock struck eleven he was just dozing off on a stuffy old four-poster up under the rafters.

It must have been after nine next morning when he was awakened by a stentorian voice in the garden below.

"No, Elsie, you won't find many crooks that can get the best of Cy Slocum. Mulwhinny's here all right. Look at this cuff link with an M on it that I found by the gate. And look at those footprints by the lattice. They're exactly like the ones Mulwhinny left yesterday in Mrs. Trowbridge's garden."

"But, Cy," protested Elsie, every other word in italics, "that means that a *burglar* went through my *room!*"

"Guess it does. Anyhow, we'll have a look."

With a conviction that the jig was up, Meade tiptoed out to the head of the stairs to listen as they came in. Elsie, poor girl, was doing her level best. In a high, shrill voice, doubtless for the benefit of the trapped man upstairs, she was desperately urging the policeman to search the lower floor first. But Cy was not to be moved.

"No, Elsie," he roared. "You're a bright girl, but you can't teach Cy Slocum anything about the police business. If Mulwhinny's anywhere he's up in the attic."

There followed the sound of a heavy step on the stairs, coming higher and higher as Meade's heart sank farther and farther into his boots. Then, just as the chief reached the top of the first flight and Meade was beginning to wonder what had become of Elsie, the latter's voice rang out triumphantly from far below.

"Oh, Cy," she cried, "come back. I've been talking with Al Slade over the phone, and he says he's got a telegram for you. It's from the chief of police in New York. They arrested a man named Magee, and found Mrs. Dalton's pearls in his room. Please hurry."

There was a rumble on the stairs as the policeman floundered down. Meade drew a deep breath of relief. What a brick that girl was! But the end was not yet. After a short interval of silence the sounds of a renewed altercation came up from below.

"But, Cy"—Elsie's voice was pitifully distressed—"aren't you going to New York now?"

"Sure I am. But I'm going to search your attic first. That Mulwhinny is entirely too slick a bird to be left to go around loose in a town full of decent people like this."

Again the stairs creaked and again Meade prepared to lie down and take the count. Poor Elsie had evidently come to the end of her string. He could hardly hope for any more help from her. But before the policeman had ascended half a dozen steps the bell rang, the front door was opened, and Elsie's voice cried out: "Why, Mrs. Dalton!"

"Good morning, Elsie," was the reply in a voice as deep and powerful as a grenadier's. "Is Cy Slocum here? Because if he is I want to inform him of a forged telegram that came yesterday and led me on a wild-goose chase——"

"But, Mrs. Dalton, we've found your pearls."

"What?"

"Yes. They're in New York. They were found there hidden in the room of a man named Magee. Cy just got a telegram about it from the New York police."

"Cy, is this true?"

"Sure it's true."

"Very well then, you and I will start for New York at once. We can get the nine-forty-five train."

"All right, Mrs. Dalton. Just as soon as I take a look through the attic. I've got a notion that Mulwhinny's up there."

"I have no interest in any person named Mulwhinny," the voice boomed on, going over the chief like a steam roller. "I want my pearls. So come. If we don't hurry we'll miss the train."

Slocum tried to stand firm, but he was as putty in her hands, and presently the closing of the front door announced that the gentler sex had again prevailed. Then Elsie's laughing voice came up through the empty hall.

"You can come down now, Mr. Man. The coast is clear."

Meade descended, and together they laughed over Cy's discomfiture.

"But what's become of your father?" Meade suddenly asked.

"Oh, father got a telegram saying that Aunt Ella is sick, so he took the nine o'clock train for Pomfret."

Something in her tone made Meade look at her with a shrewd twinkle in his eyes. "There seems to be an awful lot of sickness among the aunts and mothers of the people of this town," he observed dryly.

"Yes, isn't there? Quite an epidemic." She smiled innocently up into his face. "So you see," she taunted him, "you won't have to go to Sing Sing after all."

"And you," he retorted, "won't have to stay in Belmont any longer, unless you want to."

"What do you mean?" she demanded, beginning to tremble a little.

He took her small hand in his. "You know what I mean," he said.

"But I don't know *you*," she protested.

"Oh, that's all right," he told her. "Friends of mine who've tried it say there's nothing like marriage for getting people acquainted."

She thought it over for a moment, and then suddenly asked: "What do you want me to say?"

"Nothing much. Just promise to let me love, honor and obey till death do us part."

A breathless little "Oh" escaped her. Then the violet-gray eyes began to dance again, and there was a fresh display of dimples. "Very well," she laughed, "I promise."

At this he leaned down, and for the second time kissed her.

"So that's that," he said.

About Signatures

"I THINK it's Simmons," said the signature expert of the Treasury, as he laid aside the magnifying-glass and wiped his eyes with a silk handkerchief. He had for half an hour been examining a curious scroll on the back of a check. It consisted of a black stroke of a pen, tapering off to an irregular line, and was there to represent the name of some bank cashier.

"There is not a letter in it," he said, holding it up to the light, "but it means Simmons."

"Do you have many of that sort?"

"Worse than that. Five or six hundred different signatures pass through here in a month, maybe, and two-thirds of them are illegible. Bank cashiers seldom make any letters in their signatures. They adopt a certain form of scrolls generally, and always use it for their signatures. Some of them are very curious. This, for instance," and he took from a drawer a paper across which was scrawled a character that looked like a schoolboy's sketch of a whirlwind. The line had been spun around and around in one piece like a spiral spring, then shot across the paper about half an inch, when the gyration was again repeated, and this was followed by another dash and some more circles. "That," said the expert, "is the signature of the cashier of one of the New York banks. Of course there are no letters in it, but we know what it means, and could swear to it at any time. I wouldn't want a better signature. But if you want a longer one, here it is," and he handed out another draft.

"The length of this," he said, "is regulated by the width of the paper on which it is written. It consists, you see, merely of high up-and-down strokes, perfectly pointed at the top, and all of about the same height. Again you have no name at all. It is simply the sign of a name, but it is just as good for us. It is always the same, and, as simple as it may seem, I don't think it could be counterfeited. Here is another with the same pointed strokes, but there are fewer of them, and the signature is higher than it is long. But there is one signature we get on checks principally which is more remarkable than either of these. The letters are all the same height, and will reach from top to bottom across the face of a check. At first glance nothing can be made of it, but if you follow the line carefully you can unravel the name, and you will be surprised at its plainness. Each letter is perfect in itself, but is so tall and narrow that at the first glance you don't comprehend what it is.

"We come across some very curious signatures, and some mighty bad ones. Those of Ben Butler and Horace Greely were famous for their ugliness, but they would fall into insignificance alongside of the scrawls that pass through here on drafts and checks."

"How do you make them out?"

"Generally the contour suggests the name, though no letters may be formed. Sometimes I know a name at first glance, when, if I try to analyze it, I am thrown off the track entirely. Probably once or twice we have had to write to find out what a name was, but generally, when they are too much for me, the register of the banks will give the name. When we come across a new signature that is particularly hard to make out we make a record of it so that whenever we see the same combination of odd characters we know what it stands for."

"Is a bad signature a sign of ignorance?"

"By no means. The worst signatures are those of educated men, generally bank officials. They are always written freely and quickly. Write your name as fast as you can and see what it looks like. That's the way it's done. These men have to write their names so often that they get to making the quickest combination of characters possible, and adopt it as their signature."

"What is the easiest signature to forge?"

"One that is extremely bad or remarkably good. Spinner used to write the worst signature of any man in this department. Yet there were a dozen clerks who could counterfeit it so perfectly that no one could tell the difference. The perfect Spencerian signature, however, is the easiest to imitate. One of the best American signatures I have ever seen is that of Jordan. It is beautiful to look at—as clear and legible as engraving—but I don't think it could be counterfeited. He can write his name quicker than any man I ever saw.

"The most ponderous signature I ever struck was that of Drake De Kay, who was Assistant Adjutant-General under McClellan. When he signed letters and papers of various kinds they used to be spread out on the floor, where the sun would strike them to dry. This is a fact. I don't know what he used to write with, but I think it was a stick."

"Do you ever come across any forgeries?"

"Yes, but the large majority of them are innocent. They grow out of ignorance. Sometimes checks come in with a man's name signed to them, and when we come to look over the papers in the claim against which the check is drawn we find he can't write at all, and has used a mark only. Then, of course, we know there has been a forgery committed. But it generally turns out that the man has had some one sign his name for him, and the parties have been led into a forgery innocently.

SUCH HOME-MADE GOLD WOULD BANKRUPT UNITED STATES

"H. BOND, Wholesale Manufacturer of Gold and Radium," is a business sign which may be expected soon in London if what the H. Bond in question says is true.

He is a disciple of a French professor who practically beggared himself trying to extract gold from mercury. After fourteen years experimenting the professor believes he has succeeded and is said to have submitted a specimen of his metal to a famous professor at Oxford, whose analysis, it is asserted, showed 90 per cent. pure gold and 2 per cent. radium.

"There is not the smallest doubt that the secret of making gold has been solved," he said. "If mercury produced only gold the effect would be staggering, but the fact that radium may also be obtained makes the whole scheme simply colossal."

Pure gold costs, roughly, $25 an ounce. One hundred pounds of mercury is quoted at about $50, which, when cleaned, works out at about 75 cents a pound. The effect on gold values of such a discovery, supposing it is to be practicable, numbs the imaginaton.

Financial experts are not so much impressed with the possibilities of such a discovery.

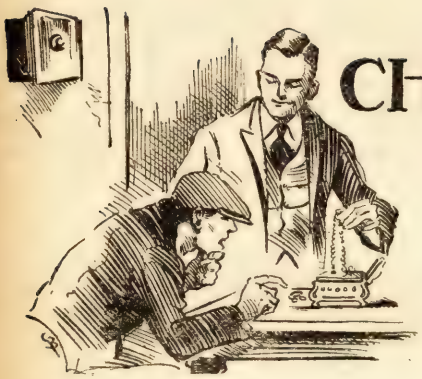
"The almost inconceivable possibility of any one being able to manufacture unlimited quantities of gold," said one, "would inevitably cause a financial panic throughout the world. America, which holds most of the world's gold, would be bankrupt and the goldfields of the world become valueless."

The specification for the patent—registered by a Spanish doctor of medicine—states:

"The process consists in subjecting the mercury to electrical discharges in a Crookes tube, in which the vacuum is sufficiently high to allow the production of cathode rays. The electrodes have their pointed extremities inclined downward adjacent to a depression in which the mercury is contained.

"This process is based on observations from which I conclude that mercury is an unstable substance consisting of minute globules or particles of metallic gold, surrounded by a small quantity of sulphurous anhydride. The separation of this latter can be effected by means of Hertzian waves.

"With an induction coil which works with a primary current of 15 amperes at 110 volts, the decomposition of the metal is produced as follows: If a tube is made of glass and the coil works with a mechanical interrupter or a Wehnelt interrupter giving from 3,000 to 4,000 breaks per minute, it is noted that the mercury undergoes partial decomposition, the whole interior of the tube becoming coated with sulphurous anhydride, and the mercury being reduced in volume, until finally it presents the appearance of a fine dull grayish powder



The CHIEF'S BIG BLUFF

BY

MERRITT L. ALLEN

THE Sparkler Club was exclusively for professional criminals, but the authorities did not know this. Only the gentlemen crooks of high standing boasted membership there.

I am not a crook, rather a diamond merchant, but at one time I was able to take the lead with any of them, and for this reason I am always sure of admittance when my baser nature craves to hear the adventures of some of the boys as they sit around the open fireplace.

The boys cornered me the other night and made me tell of my last trick. Most of them had heard it before, but for the sake of the new members they asked me to repeat it. I had to laugh, for even the old members hung around to hear my tale once more.

"I have always been enchanted with the wealth of gems. When I was a youngster I had but one desire, and that was to work in a jewelry store so I could look at the precious stones whenever I pleased. When I was twenty I knew the history of nearly every famed jewel. It was no wonder that I was an expert in that line, for I dreamed about the priceless things at night and handled and studied them during the daytime. I traveled abroad in quest of exquisitely matched pearls, and before I returned to this country I made a thorough study of the cutting of the diamond. At the age of thirty I was a diamond merchant in a Western city. But at about this time my wife was taken seriously ill. The doctors could not diagnose her case and seemed unable to help her at all. It was her great will power that kept her living for a year longer, and then she passed away. I had neglected my business. Diamonds were nothing compared to the love I had for my wife. I don't know to this day why he did it, but my business partner disappeared, and with him the most valuable of our collection. I made no attempt to find him, but just as soon as the great grief for my wife began to weaken there began to steal over me an intense desire to get even with something or some one, I did not know just who or what, for having taken my wife and my diamonds. I became a crook! Not just a thief, for I studied the game with the intensity of a maniac thirsting for something beyond his reach. I lived in luxury, posing as an immensely rich foreigner. I eluded the police for so long that I thought I couldn't be caught. The greatest incident of my life occurred in the city of Seattle. I was doing the city up in an unusually clean style, but I soon realized the entire force was after me and decided the best thing for me was to

leave the city for a few weeks. When I returned I put up at a hotel by the name of the McAllister. It was in that hotel I discovered where I could make a good haul.

"I gained entrance to the apartment of Mr. Charlton in the Willow Apartment House with a skeleton key. I knew the Charltons had left town and I could work unmolested, but I had hardly started exploring when I heard a scraping noise on the outside of the building, and before long a dark figure started to tinker with the glass door which led out on a balcony.

"My first thought was that some one else had been tipped off and was after the same sparklers as I, but then I realized that it could only be a sneak thief and a fool one at that to stand in the street light and force a lock. The door finally swung open under the pressure of his jimmy, and I hid behind the heavy velvet draperies in a doorway just in time to escape the rays of his electric torch. His light played about the room for some time and then rested on an old-fashioned safe in one corner. He kneeled before it and began to fumble with the combination. I had to laugh to myself; he must be very green, for no one would keep anything valuable in a safe like that. It was probably some old antique handed down through the family. I made up my mind that the little piece of comedy had gone about far enough, for he might spoil my chances of locating the jewels I came after, so I tiptoed over to the electric light switch, pulling a gun out of my pocket as I advanced. When I was all set I snapped on the light and leveled the gun in his direction. I expected to see a tough-looking, miserable wreck of humanity, but was very much surprised to find that my gun covered a bright-looking youngster, although his clothing would hardly have graced a scarecrow and his cap was pulled down over his head like an old maid's sleeping bonnet.

" 'Gee, Mr. Charlton, I thought youse was out of town,' he said to me in a sheepish tone.

"He evidently took me for the owner. But why should such a little shaver like that be robbing people? I decided to give him a scare in the hope that it would cure him of his waywardness. I stormed at him as loud as I dared without attracting attention. 'So you're the little brat that's been robbing these apartments for the past month? Thought you'd make a nice haul, did you? Well, I guess your career is over now.' He had assumed a sullen expression during my tirade, but when I reached over and picked up the telephone instrument from a large oaken desk, he burst out with

" 'Oh, mister! Mister! Don't, please don't give me up to the cops; they'll put me in the jug sure.'

"I gave my directions to the desk sergeant, all the while keeping my eye on the kid, who dropped into a chair while I telephoned, and when I was through he wailed:

" 'Say, mister, ain't you got no heart at all? Were you ever up against it and in need of dough?'

"I had hard work to keep from laughing; if the little thief only knew who he was talking to. I started to lecture him on stooping so low as to steal, but he cut me short with

" 'Ah, can that stuff. Talk don't buy shoes for the family.'

"This statement surprised me very much, but a few questions revealed the fact that his family consisted of his mother and a cripled brother much younger than himself. He told me a pitiful tale of keeping the house supplied with enough to eat, for he was the sole bread winner. He had tried to make enough selling papers, but that didn't go, so as a last resort he was trying to make a living as a sneak thief. I pleaded with him to give up such a life, but he wouldn't listen to me. His story touched me as nothing had since the death of my wife.

"We were both startled by a sound in the hall.

"I tiptoed over to the door and listened for a long time, but could hear nothing. Something told me to get out of that room and get out quick, but I disregarded the feeling. I must get the jewels I came after. The kid was watching me in a questioning way. I motioned him to a chair with my gun, and then started to tap the panels which formed the wall.

"I soon found the one I was looking for and had no difficulty in sliding it back and disclosing a wall safe. The kid couldn't keep still any longer.

" 'Say, you're not Charlton; you've been fooling me all along, ain't yuh?'

"I nodded my head and told him to keep quiet, for I wanted to hurry up and get out of

there. He kept his mouth shut, but while I was working at the combination he rushed around the room sticking everything of any value whatever into his pockets, but when I finally opened the safe and brought out the cases and dumped the contents on the desk, he stared with eyes like saucers. I looked at the eager, boyish face, and suddenly felt lonesome. I would have given anything for a companion with his spirit and enthusiasm, for it had been a long while since I had taken any one to my heart. Then a great idea struck me; why not take him on as a partner if he was bound to go wrong? I could help him to learn the tricks of the day, and he would then be able to send his mother and brother to the country. I asked him how he liked the idea. He almost went frantic with joy, ending up with

"'And I could send my kid brother to one of those guys what makes people all well again? Do you think I could ever learn to open those things like you do? Say, will you open that big one I tackled when I first came in here?'

"I was getting nervous. The feeling was getting stronger that I should get out and lose no time about it either, but I wanted to please the kid, and perhaps pride tempted me to show off my skill. I dropped on my knees before the old relic and began to finger the combination, and then—will I ever forget it—the lights were snapped out and I felt cold steel around my wrists and heard the sharp click of snap-locks. Once more the room was flooded with light.

"The kid stood by the switch, smiling at me in a superior way, but he was no longer a youngster. He had pulled off his hat and disclosed a head of black hair well sprinkled with gray. I realized that I was caught, and all because I had let down the bars of my hatred for all mankind and taken this supposedly needy kid to my heart. I guess he thought that an explanation was in order out of decency's sake, for he growled:

"'Well, I've got you at last, and it was the toughest job I've ever had. I have been on your trail for the last two months, and every time you gave me the slip. This time I took every precaution possible. I saw you sneak up behind the curtain at the Hotel McAllister and listen when Mr. Charlton explained to his wife where he had put her jewels. I found out that they were going on a trip and suspected that this was your next move. I saw you when you got out of your Marmon and walked in here as if you owned the place; I saw——'

"But right there I cut him short and told him that there was no use telling how he caught me as long as it was all over. I was getting hot under the collar and was forming all kinds of threats in my mind of what I would do when once my sentence was served. The detective picked up the telephone and cursed the operator because she didn't answer. I laughed aloud, for I was gaining control of myself, and he laughed, too, when he found that the telephone wire had been cut.

"Just then the elevator door opened out in the hall, and some one started toward the room where we were.

"The detective became inert for several seconds, his face drew into a perplexed expression, he looked at me and then at the door, and then as if reaching some whirlwind conclusion, ordered me to stick out my hands. He took off the bracelets and stuck a gun in my hand. I tried to collect my thoughts and to figure out just what was going on, just what it all meant, but I couldn't seem to cope with the situation. He gave me a dry smile and nodded toward the door upon which the person on the other side was beating a wild tattoo, and said:

"'Open the door and follow my lead.'

"One thing I did know, and that was I had a loaded gun in my hand and my late captor was standing by the old safe with his hands held above him. It would have been a simple matter to get out the same way he had entered, but there was a feeling that the detective still had the upper hand. I unlocked the door, and a short, stocky built man of the square-toe detective type came in, but stopped short as his narrowing eyes took in the details. He put his right hand into his coat pocket and slipped just back of me. I held my tongue, for I was more than willing that some one else should take the lead.

"'It's all right, Farley; this is Mr. Charlton and he thinks I am a burglar. Tell him who I am.'

"'Why, this is Mr. Pearson, our chief. We're after the guy that had your house lined up for a show-down to-night.'

"I dropped the gun in my pocket and smiled, saying in as cool and even a voice as possible:

"Well, I'm sorry, chief, but how was I to know? I beg your pardon for hindering your work like this. Is there anything I can do for you?

"'Oh, that's all right, Mr. Charlton,' he made reply; 'I'm glad you didn't take me over to the station. That would have been a joke on me. Come on, Farley; I think perhaps Mr. Charlton would like a little rest after all the excitement. We certainly slipped up to-night, but better luck next time. By the way, Mr. Charlton, here's my card; drop around and see me to-morrow, and we'll talk the matter over.'

"I actually slept in the Charlton apartment that night. Nothing short of death could have overcome my curiosity to know why, after having me hog-tied, this man Pearson let me, a guilty man, go unguarded and, as far as I knew, free. I could hardly wait for the time to come when he would be in his office at the station. Pearson was giving some instructions to his men when I was announced. He waved me to a comfortable chair, and then went on with his instructions. After the last man had gone he wheeled around and motioned me to draw up my chair and then proceeded without any preliminaries.

"'I suppose you wonder why I let you go last night? Well, to make a long story short, I figured that the man who was pulling these jobs must know something about stones, and then an account of your wife's death and your partner's disappearance popped into my mind and just put the two facts together, and I soon had enough evidence to substantiate my suspicions. I really believe that sorrow and disappointment temporarily unbalanced your mind, but the reason I let you go last night was because you were going to do a big, unselfish service for me, believing that my story was straight. That is why I am letting you go free, but I am more than convinced that there would be a loss all around if I were the means of putting you behind the bars. Go East, live straight, and be a man once more.'

"I took his advice."

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EVOLUTION THEORY OF HUMAN SPEECH

WHY have none of the higher animals developed speech? asks Dr. B. Naunyn in the *Deutsches Archiv feur Klinische Medizin* (Leipzig). He points out that the sounds made by animals and birds are imitative, like the "da-da-da" of a happy baby. But the infant progresses beyond echo-speech to actual speech, which no animal or bird can do.

And he proceeds to answer his question on the theory that man has evolved from the lower animals—a theory that is rapidly losing ground among serious scientific men—about as follows:

When man began to walk erect and use his hands, the right hand was found more convenient for attack and defense, gestures, and the ordinary uses of life; the left hand being used more for carrying things.

This greater use of the right hand, not the more abundant blood supply in the left hemisphere (criminals have the latter), was what stimulated the left hemisphere of the brain to higher development. This provided Romanes' 'casual anatomic factor" that distinguishes man from animals and made articulate speech possible.

It is a consequence of man's walking erect and using his hands as hands. Speaking and the organ of speech developed together.

The singing of birds and their balancing are by-products of the evolution of their organ of hearing, as also music in man, along with rhythm and dancing, although a music sense evidently co-operates with the internal ear.

Great Men's Pets

THE attachment which some men have formed for animals of various kinds is an amusing subject. When philosophers have had neither wife nor children, they have taken to dogs, horses, serpents, birds, and even spiders.

Goethe rarely passed a day without bringing out from the chimney corner a live snake which he kept there, and he caressed it like a bosom friend.

Tiberius, a Roman emperor, also made an intimate companion of a serpent, which he trained to take food out of his hand.

Augustus was exceedingly fond of a parrot, but still more so of a quail, the loss of which made him as sad as if he had lost a battle.

Honorius, another Roman emperor, was so grieved at the loss of a favorite hen, named Roma, that he would willingly have given Rome itself to bring it back; but Alaric had taken Rome.

The Emperor Dominican occupied his leisure in catching flies.

Louis XI., when ill in Plessis-le-Tours, only found pleasure in an exhibition of dancing pigs, oddly dressed up, which were trained for his special entertainment.

Richter was very fond of tame animals, which he constantly had about him. Sometimes a mouse, then a great white cross spider, which he kept in a paper box with a glass top. There was a little door beneath, by which he could feed his prisoner with dead flies. In the autumn he collected his winter food for his little tree-frog and his tame spider. "How I wish," he wrote once to his friend Otto, "that you could have met me in the street or in the Harmony. Then you would have seen my little squirrel upon my shoulder, who bites no longer."

Henry III., of France, was so foolishly fond of spaniels that he used to carry a litter of them in a basket suspended round his neck when giving his audiences. His passion for these animals cost him on the average not less than 100,000 crowns a year.

Charles I. of England was also very fond of spaniels, and the breed of his dogs is still famous in this country. Frederick the Great was also a great dog fancier.

The painter, Razzi, formed friendships with all sorts of animals, and he filled his house with squirrels, monkeys, Angora cats, dwarfs, asses, he goats and Elba ponies. Beside these he had an enormous raven, who gravely strode about among the other animals as if he were the exhibitor of this Noah's ark. When any one knocked at the door the raven called "Come in!" in a loud voice.

Pelisson, confined in the Bastille, made a friend of a spider, which he tamed. The jailer, one day seeing Pelisson take pleasure in contemplating the insect, crushed it under his foot and left the prisoner distressed and melancholy at the loss of his friend.

Latude, in the same prison, made companions of six-and-twenty rats who inhabited his cell. He gave each of them a name, and they learned to come to him at his call. He fed them, played with them, and they thus greatly relieved the ennui of his captivity.

But Latude only made friends of rats from necessity. The Marquis de Montespan, in perfect freedom of choice, had the extraordinary taste to amuse himself with mice when occupying the gilded apartments of Versailles. True, the mice were white, and had been brought to him all the way from Siberia, but the taste was a most odd one, nevertheless.

Cardinal Mazarin, the French Minister, employed his leisure in playing with an ape, and Cardinal Richelieu amused himself with his collection of cats.

The poet Alfieri was proud of his horses, and took great delight in fondling and caressing them.

Cowper was at no time so happy as when feeding his tame hares.

There are other historic names associated with pet animals, among which may be named the vulture of Semiramis, the butterfly of Virgil, the starling of Nero, the ape of Commodus, the sparrow of Heliogabalus, and the dove of Mohammed.

Among the other relaxations of learned and great men may be mentioned Calvin's game of throwing dice along a table; whereas Luther was great in ninepins. When he knocked down all the pins at a stroke his delight knew no bounds.

Boileau was very fond of the same game, and when he prostrated the nine pins he was better pleased than if he had completed his best ode.

Massillon, the preacher, used to assemble Oratorians and Jesuits in his room, and set them to playing at chess together, meanwhile exhorting them never to engage in any less innocent warfare.

Buffon's great delight was in gleaning the village gossip from the village barber during his morning toilet.

Charlemagne's chief relaxation and pleasure consisted in swimming in a bath, together with his sons, officers and others. Charlemagne beat them all at swimming.

Boyle's (the philosopher) great delight, like Curran's, was to watch the exhibition of puppet shows. The performance of "Punchinello" invariably drew him into the street, and he did not mind standing in the midst of a shower of rain to witness it.

In like manner, Tasso's liveliest amusement was to see masquerades and enjoy the diversions of the populace during the public festivals.

FACTS ABOUT A DESERT

A DESERT is popularly held to be a region wholly or partly without vegetation, a region that is rainless, usually sandy and commonly not habitable.

This idea, however, is based upon error. There is a failure to recognize the fact that whether or not a region is habitable is not a criterion of its aridity. The development of modern methods of transportation has made possible the maintenance of dwellings and towns with a considerable population at one or even two hundred miles from the nearest supply of water. Even such facilities are not necessary to the sustenance of a population in deserts of the most extreme type, as illustrated by the Sahara, which has a population of two and a half million.

So far as vegetation is concerned the actual number of individuals is much less than on a similar area in a moist climate. This in fact is one of the chief characteristics of a desert, but it would not be safe to estimate the total number of species much below the average number.

Lastly, it is to be remembered that local topography has little influence on the desert character of a region. Sandy flats, plains, valleys and rocky hills reaching to such altitudes as to become mountains are included in some consequence of the sparse vegetation as one factor that the surface layers of the substratum, being usually dry in arid regions, are readily shifted and worn by winds.

What, then, is a desert?

The term desert may be applied to areas of the earth's surface which support a sparse vegetation of a more or less specialized character owing to inadequate or lack of soil. Of these conditions scanty water supply may be regarded as of the greatest importance, and it is to this factor that most deserts owe their existence.

Desert conditions arise in any region in which the rainfall is markedly less than the amount of water that evaporates from the surface. As the amount of evaporation naturally increases from the polar regions toward the tropics, it follows that no arbitrary amount of rainfall may be designated as an invariable cause or accompaniment of arid or desert conditions.

Thus in certain portions of the tropics a rainfall of less than seventy inches results in aridity, while some of the most fertile agricultural districts in the north and south temperate zones receive one-third this amount.

The Man With Two Right Hands

By KATHERINE STAGG

CHAPTER ONE

BEFORE the great war Captain Amundel Marvin had been a bit of a swell. But he, like many another, had learned the lesson of real democracy on Europe's battlefields. When he returned to his own country it was to pursue the business of private detective "on his own," and he found it almost as exciting as war had been.

One night he was strolling up Broadway with a man, when a heavy shower came down suddenly, and they jumped for shelter into a doorway of one of the taxpayer buildings in the seventies.

As they were attired in the coolness of Palm Beach suits, they gazed somewhat ruefully at the continued downpour. The passing taxis were filled, and many bedraggled figures were hurrying in every direction.

Not a few, however, turned into the doorway and ascended the long stairway.

Marvin, tall, with the true soldier lift of his shoulders, was a pleasing picture with his brisk manner and clear brown eyes; quite the American type of well-groomed manhood.

His companion was a much smaller man; dark, almost swart, he seemed to be Latin-American in cast of features. His clear English, peculiarly slangless, gave no clue to his home country. He was unmistakably foreign; in fact, there was an atmosphere of something exotic about him.

They were not friends, but merely casual acquaintances who had chatted several times on the subject of spiritism over their cigars in the lobby of their hotel. But the man's personality had impressed Captain Marvin, trained to watch for the unusual wherever he might find it.

Group after group passed into the building, and Marvin's companion had an idea.

"There seems to be something going on here, and it don't look like dance people who are climbing those stairs," he said. "I wonder if it is anything we can butt into until the rain is over?" and he glanced at the detective curiously.

"I do not fancy getting wet," said Marvin; "I wish it might be a place we could enter by paying an admission fee."

"Let's go up and explore," suggested the foreigner.

At the head of the stairway was a sign on a door which stood half open: "Meeting Tonight." The nature of the meeting was not described, but Marvin was not slow to guess that it was one of the sporadic occult affairs that are rather popular at present. The room was attractive, just small enough to have the advantage of what we call, in the little theatre movement, an intimate air, and yet the seats, arranged in rows, would accommodate perhaps sixty or seventy people.

The hall was about half filled, a fairly good showing for a night in August. A small platform at the upper end was banked with flowers, and a piano stood open at the side. On the platform stood a woman in a tense attitude, evidently waiting for the audience to be seated and quiet. She was about thirty years of age, but with a curiously child-like clearness of gaze. The woman was an ash blond, delicate to fragility, yet with the suggestion of some inner strength, fine and responsive as one of the steel wires of the musical instruments at her side.

There were piles of sheet music on the piano, some with classical titles, but evidently no player was at hand, for, as the two men found seats near the door, the woman on the platform raised her hand for order. Some one closed the outside door and pulled down the sign, which slipped into the glass panel. Im-

mediately the lights were lowered, and one of Chopin's immortal melodies stole on the air, coming from behind heavy curtains that hung back of the platform. The effect was really rather wonderful, being entirely unexpected, and Marvin sat at attention, thoroughly awake that this was at least something new in the understanding of the value of dramatic atmosphere. It surely was an improvement on the nasal singing of the threadbare hymns, usual at such meetings, and when another Chopin was followed by a weird Russian selection, and the odor of a most exotic incense floated in the air, a distinct condition was created that made Broadway seem a thousand miles off.

As the music died away in a long-sustained chord the woman began to speak in an exquisitely soft and vibrant voice.

"Friends, I hope you will not be disappointed at the change in the usual procedure of this meeting to-night, but it has been arranged that I should begin the lecture and seance in just this way for a special purpose." She paused for a moment, then continued: "Next week the meetings will be conducted as usual."

Then there followed a seance such as no one had ever participated in before. The usual trivial stuff that is so wearing on the nerves of the true psychological student was entirely lacking. Each and all of the audience had some revelation of a most vital character. The woman on the platform seemed truly inspired, giving life and meaning to every question asked of her. There was something uncanny about the way she read their minds. Every face was pale and tense, every eye glittered in the dim light like uncanny jewels. Captain Marvin sat bolt upright, power in every muscle, for he realized that at last there was something under the sun, even in spiritualism.

"The close and frequent sight of death is the reason many of our returned soldiers became so sensitized that they do not wish to gossip about their experiences to the curious. It has given them a strange power to respond to new impressions," the lecturer remarked.

The woman was clad in some thin, black stuff, loose and clinging, from which, in the half light, her arms gleamed like silver; slightly luminous, silvery wands, they pointed here and there as she uttered her sybiline words.

Marvin had no idea whether it was an hour or ten hours that the lecture continued, but each person had been told some one thing that seemed true to them. She had taken them in rows, as though it were a schedule to be gone through, and when she neared the last row of seats where the two men had taken their places she paused perceptibly.

With all the excitement of the experience Marvin kept hold of himself enough to wonder if he or his companion would be the next object of her attention. Turning slightly in his seat, he was startled by a blinding flash of light, as powerful as that of a flashlight for a photograph. Could it all be just a new variety of hocus-pocus? he thought. But he was speedily convinced that it was something of quite another nature when he saw at least a dozen of the audience topple over in their seats in almost every attitude of collapse. Some were huddled in confused heaps, as if they were dead. Strangely enough it was his own companion who seemed to have caused the blinding flash.

The first thought of the detective was to see that the door was safely open, for he had no wish for a locked-in scene of panic. Quick as he was, however, his dark companion was before him to reach the door. It opened to the touch, and sounds of Broadway, and the whir of the motors came gratefully to the ear, and seemed to have a comforting effect after the weird exhibition that had come to such a strange climax.

Some one had found the electric switch, and had turned on the full force of the large central bunch light. The audience were in various stages of fright. One or two women had fainted, and one practical individual was passing a pocket flask in a burst of unthinking generosity. But the woman on the platform had disappeared!

The dark man pulled at Marvin's sleeve and whispered: "Come at once; these superstitious creatures are of no account." This was said in a curious, sibilant voice, as if each syllable were escaping steam.

Turning to look at him, Marvin saw that his eyes were widely distended and as wild as those of some maniac. But the look was that of increased vital power rather than fright, and the whole person of the man was tense,

tiger-like, expressing the acme of concentrated will—the will of some fierce knowledge.

"Would we not better see what has become of the medium? I have heard of some dangerous accidents in these cases?"

Marvin made the suggestion, and tried to impel the dark man back into the lecture room, for he had no intention of losing sight of the excited foreigner. His curiosity was drving him two ways, but if he had to choose, he felt, for some queer reason, that the man must not be lost sight of. He had not reckoned on the speed with which he had to make up his mind, for the man fairly flew down the long stairway, and it took all the agility of Marvin's long legs to reach the street a moment later.

He drew a long breath.

"Now what do you suppose did really happen? What became of the silvery lady?" he demanded.

The dark man eyed him an instant.

"If I told you the truth you would not believe me."

"Oh, I might; I've struck some queer things in my time; do you know what happened?"

"Yes, I know! I caused her to disappear!"

"You caused—— What do you mean?"

"There! I knew you would not believe." An expression of puzzlement and annoyance crossed the stranger's face.

"But in what way? and what for?" Marvin gasped, half convinced that the man was crazy.

"Come into this café; you look in need of refreshment for all your fine muscular strength, and I will tell you as much as I am allowed to tell any one."

The speaker had glanced at Marvin's superior size and bulk with a somewhat whimsical look, as if it were a childish kind of strength compared to his.

CHAPTER TWO

OUTSIDE the rain had stopped, and a full moon was shining over the tall buildings, etching their outlines against a purple sky. They turned into the café the dark man had designated with a wave of his sinuous arm, and seated themselves in a quiet corner. Marvin eyed his companion suspiciously, as he still imagined the man was a little flighty.

"This New York of yours—the inhabitants think money can buy any mortal thing in the world, do they not?" the man began after they had been served with tall glasses filled with ice and some liquid which shall be nameless.

"Oh, yes, that is the general idea of the little old town, but we showed them in Europe we could have other considerations when we saw fit," Marvin replied.

"Quite so, but it takes an enormous reason to overcome the money god in this country. I am from Asia, as you may have guessed. I call myself Gregorio, and am thought to be a Spaniard, simply to make it easier for certain matters that brought me here." He paused and sipped his drink slowly, as if thinking carefully of just how much he would divulge.

"I see," said Marvin, nodding.

"This very day," continued the man who called himself Gregorio, "I was offered one million dollars in cold cash to tell a secret that if I had waited one moment more the medium, as you call her, might have told. She could read my mind as plain as reading a book. I was convinced of that, and I felt forced to—how shall I say it?—to make her withdraw herself to her real element. That's why I caused that flash. The gas from the chemical I used overpowered some of the spectators."

"What in the name of all that is mysterious do you mean by that?" Marvin exclaimed.

"My dear friend, I warned you that you would not believe me; the fact is there are many strange experiments going on now between the two worlds—this physical one and that shadowy other one that you consider the spiritual. I will not enter into arguments that would only puzzle you, for I, too, know only a few more facts than you do. Now and again certain conditions are unusually good and we psychologists get remarkable results. To-night happened to be one of those times. The woman you saw on the platform was really not a woman of the world, but one of those who sometimes can cross over from the shadowland. I have seen her before once or twice under the very different circumstances, and when I realized to-night the nature of her visit I waited with much uncertainty as to what I should do, for it is a most dangerous

business among ordinary people. I finally became convinced that she was a renegade and was going to disclose to humanity one of the secrets that is forbidden. That is what impelled me to act so promptly to defeat her plan."

The detective was convinced now that he was dealing with a lunatic, and figured to humor him, just to find out what his ulterior object was.

"Of course my ignorance is monumental," said Marvin, "and for the sake of argument I will concede that such mysterious things may be. May I know now where the million-dollar secret comes in?"

Gregorio nodded and answered:

"You must know that in the Dark Ages the great religious painters were students of the occult. They put more than mere paint into their pictures. That is the reason of their singular effect on the beholders. It is also the despair of the modern artist, whose work is so much finer technically, but lacks the inner spirit, which can only be divined, not taught."

"I must confess that I dislike the old masters," said Marvin, "but I do know that they have a haunting quality that one can't forget."

"My friend, there is an element more rare than radium, practically unknown and only to be found in just one spot on this earth. It is the element used by the greatest ancient artists. The secret of its location has been handed down from the Dark Ages by means of the Artist Guilds. The most infinitesimal bit of this element in an artist's paint will give the most magical quality to the sunlight of a picture, and all the old artists have often used it without in the least knowing its nature. For many centuries the location of this element was lost to every one but the artist Corot. He deemed it wise to divulge its hiding-place. A careful description of the island where this element is hidden he transcribed on the back of a certain painting."

"I get that all right," murmured Marvin; "Corot's light is real enough to dazzle one."

"Yes, you are right, but this picture has been stolen from its owner, and when all other means of finding it failed mediums were consulted. It was ascertained that madam once knew the secret location of the divine element used by the old masters. She and her husband, we suspect, stole the Corot, and thus learned the secret. We must prevent her disclosing what she knows and capture her husband to get the painting away from him; I want your help to find this crook."

Marvin gave a long whistle and almost swallowed his cigarette in his amazement.

"My help! What could I do up against a lot of these mediums, or adepts, or whatever you call 'em?"

The man who called himself Gregorio smiled imperturbably.

"My friend, the world of man is still in its infancy, and the strong food of knowledge must come very gradually, or we would all be swallowed up in a debacle worse than the one we have just survived. I, too, must go slowly, and I, too, only have a faint glimmer of the possibilities, and in certain lines of human affairs I am but an infant compared to you; hence my wish to secure your aid."

"Thanks for the compliment; I feel about seven years old listening to these marvels, but, by Jove! I like it, and I am yours to command if there is anything I really can do."

"I felt sure of it, and your reward will be appropriate, never fear." Gregorio rose as if the interview was over.

"Shekels don't enter into this, man," swore Marvin as he grasped the thin sinewy hand of the other; "what ho for the adventure, say I! But wait a moment; who is this man? And where am I to look for him?"

"He was once a great student and has much knowledge; it is too bad, but now he has turned the worst kind of crook, for he holds the strings, as you say in this country, and tells your big bankers when to say yes and when to say no, but he keeps carefully in the background."

"Do I know him by name?"

"I scarcely think so; he holds many positions in banking circles, but he always works in such an intricate net of his subordinates that it is difficult to locate his responsibility."

"But I must have some line to follow."

"He has one peculiar mark; some time I may tell you the story of how that occurred, but not now; I do not know what name he is using at present, but find me a man whose two hands both should be right hands; do you understand me? On the left hand the thumb is on the

outside and the fingers distributed so the smallest finger is inside; it is curious, and he makes great efforts to disguise it, but you should be able to find the man with that clue. I don't know where he is, but by all signs he is in the city, and I wish to have that Corot in my possession inside of a week; can you do it?"

"Holy smoke! It's some order, but I'm a fish that can stand some rough swimmin'; my hand on it again. Good-night!"

CHAPTER THREE

As Captain Marvin walked down Broadway, his enthusiasm cooled a little and reaction set in. He wondered if he were not a monumental ass to be taken in by such a wild story from a nut. But some inner voice of conviction told him to go on with it. He hailed a taxi and was driven to police headquarters. He spent a long time there, meticulously going over the finger-print records, although he really did not expect any results. He did it to steady his nerves and to concentrate his mind as much as anything. Still, one could not tell. But he found no hint there of a man with two right hands.

Next he tried going over some of the other records of both American and international characters of a suspicious nature, but this, too, was a blind alley for his purpose.

"Some gents' furnishings dealer might have had such an odd customer," he reflected.

It was too late to interview haberdasheries, but he made up his mind to do that in the morning. It seemed a barren idea, for the man would either buy two pairs of gloves at a time and discard the lefts, or he would have his peculiar left hand padded to fit into a right glove.

Suddenly he realized that Gregorio had not given him the slightest description of the man, other than the odd hand. Was he short or tall, thin or stout, dark or light? He might have given him some notion. It was all too vague and too unheard of, but the lure of discovery was alight in his veins, and he retired for the night with a grim determination to find this strange man or to show up this Gregorio for a hoaxster.

Marvin tossed nervously for hours, then fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed of the queer seance that he had witnessed that night. In his dream the woman, who had been called "Inca," came to him and seemed to be trying to tell him something, but each time he strained his ears to listen he would hear again that loud report, see a blinding flash, and the dream would begin all over again.

He woke in the morning, exhausted and bewildered.

As he tubbed and shaved he again asked himself if he would better not give up this wild trail.

As he selected his tie from the gay assortment on the rack he noticed a small scrap of paper lying on his room desk. On this paper was scrawled faintly one word. He took it to the light, and finally made it out to be "Hospital."

That was all and, in itself, very little, but he could have sworn the bit of paper had not been there the night before.

"Suffering Moses!" he muttered, "am I getting the nut habit? This is altogether too creepy for this bird; I'd better hang up on this other world business before I lose my bearings."

But breakfast and a brisk walk made him feel more normal.

He saw Gregorio on the far side of the hotel restaurant, but he seemed much absorbed in the conversation of a group of men, dark and as foreign-looking as himself, so Marvin merely looked across and received a nod of recognition that was scarcely more than that of a stranger.

Out of a city of millions to find an unknown man without any clue save that of a deformed hand! It surely was some order, and, as one idea after the other was rejected as futile and foolish, a wave of discouragement passed over him. But to give up seemed childish, and suddenly it came to him.

"Why not search the hospitals to see if such an individual had ever tried to rectify the blemish by an operation?"

He played with the thought for a moment. If such a thing were possible, the man would have taken that step long ago. And yet flesh grafting had been so developed by the work done during the war, it was just a chance that

the man would have made inquiry as to the possibilities at any rate.

Then the single word on the scrap of paper occurred to him; he had forgotten it in his big problem, but, like all the rest of this uncanny business, perhaps it was meant for a lead.

Doggedly he went from hospital to hospital. For hours he rode up and down the city, making the same inquiry until the quest began to seem as absurd as all the rest of this queer business. At last he struck a very slight clue.

At the Montrose Hospital, one of the smaller places devoted to research rather than usual cases, he found that a man had applied for treatment about a month before. He had wanted the hand amputated and another grafted on, but he had been advised not to have it done. They had agreed to remove the thumb and change about the fingers, so that it would appear almost normal, but the grafting of a whole hand had been refused as too dangerous. The would-be patient had gone away, saying he would consider it, but had not returned. Moreover, Marvin got a scant description of the man; he was tall, heavily built and blond, of the ruddy type, about fifty years old. He appeared to be a man of means, well dressed, impatient and haughty in manner.

This was all, but it gave him a starter, as it were.

His next move was to go to a newspaper office and ask to look over the photographs of financial men held for the "morgue," as it is called.

Carefully he scanned the dozens of grim, solid-looking men who comprise our captains of big business. Out of these only one seemed at all probable, and that was principally because the two pictures in the collection each were taken with the left hand stuck in the side pocket. This really was the slightest of signs, for many others had the hands partially hidden, but it seemed enough to at least be worth looking up the original. This one was captioned by a name of some renown as a collector of art objects, but Marvin could not remember that he had ever heard of him as being concerned deeply in the financial game. Then he recollected Gregorio's remark that he was of those who pulled the strings. It was all improbable, but yet it seemed possible, so he took a taxi to a certain number on lower Broadway, where some big powers are wont to meet in conference.

J. B. Snowden was the name he had read on the back of the two pictures, and when he asked the door man at the Broadway address if he had seen Mr. Snowden that day, the door man had no difficulty in remembering, for he said Mr. Snowden was in and out very frequently for the last few days and had left but a few minutes before and had said good-night.

Yes, he was a big, strong-looking fellow, but he had never noticed anything unusual about his hands; this was about all that Marvin's questions elicited.

"Did he drive his own car or have a chauffeur?"

The door man really didn't know, but on one occasion he had seen him entering the subway, and he didn't remember any car had waited for him at any time.

Dismissing his taxi, Marvin concluded he would call it a day, for he was tired with all his chasing. He would try to see Gregorio in the evenng and see if he thought Snowden might be the man they were hunting, although he recollected that Gregorio had said he did not know what name he was using at present. Still, he surely would know something about the man's personal description.

It was muggy and close, and Marvin thought he would ride out and have supper with his sister, who lived in Bronxville, so he dove into the subway around the corner and boarded an East Side express. The ride would be hot and tiresome, but a sight of home folks and a good meal would help to take his mind off the uncanny sequence of events that had gripped him for the last twenty-four hours.

Involuntarily he glanced up and down the car as he entered, but the occupants were the usual crowd of homegoers, and he slid into a seat and closed his eyes, hoping to get a nap.

He was half conscious of the stations being called in a thick voice and the impact of humanity as the car filled up with returning shoppers and matinee-goers. He roused at Seventy-second street, that being the station nearest to his hotel, but settled again, for he was awfully tired after his broken sleep of the night before. He felt a bit mean about retaining his seat from standing women, but once

in a while a man was entitled to be selfish, so he drowsed again.

The Ninety-sixth street station had been passed when there came a crunch, a grinding of the wheels, and the train stopped.

There had been a murmur of talk in the car, but now there was a breathless second of silence, and the lights went out.

Every one was calm for a moment or two, for the sub travelers are hardened and sophisticated. But when the minutes began to lengthen and dense volumes of smoke poured into the car, a vague rustling was followed by wild and wilder alarm.

Soon it was pandemonium. The guards tried to keep some order, but they were as powerless as nothing. People jostled back and forth in frenzied efforts to get out. Windows were broken, and the crash of glass sounded weird through the cries and shrieks of those imprisoned.

They were somewhere in that long stretch under Central Park, but how far from either station no one knew.

Marvin tried to make himself heard above the frenzy, shouting commands at the top of his voice. Other men shouted orders, but all voices were lost in the infernal din. The smoke rolled in thicker clouds, menacing their very breath. People choked, gasped, struck at each other in their fury. The feather in a girl's hat tickled Marvin's face, and gave him such annoyance that he yanked it out and pulled the girl up on the seat where he was standing for a second. It was a safer spot than the floor of the car, which was a seething mass of humans, many hurt in the struggle, and all too frenzied by this time to know how much was fright and how much was real injury. The deadly gases were doing their work, groans and wilder cries rose in a pitiful chorus.

Marvin knew there was an emergency exit somewhere near One Hundred and Fourth street, but doubted if any one would live to get out alive.

Training and war experience both helped to steady him after the first fearful panic, but he never could have told if it was minutes or hours before he found himself crawling up a stairway on his hands and knees, choking for each labored gasp of his poisoned lungs. Other humans were crawling over and under him like so many frenzied insects. His left arm still clutched and dragged at something that wore skirts, for he felt them twisting about. Around his neck he felt a huge arm, almost pulling his head from its place on his shoulders. He writhed and struggled to free himself from this muscular arm. He felt blood running down his face, whether his own or not he could not tell.

Suddenly in all that debacle and mêlée he realized that the great muscular arm that was almost garroting him came from a man on his right, and the wrong kind of hand was digging into his neck.

Did he feel a breath of air? He gave another long gasp, and with a muscular turn freed himself from the clinging woman, whipped his arms about the man on his right, gave him a bit of a clinch that he had learned from a Japanese friend, and felt that the huge mass relaxed in his grip. Marvin dragged him by main strength until they reached the top of the stairway, and two seconds later they both rolled on the grass.

When the lights came and the ambulance doctors began their work of sorting the living from the dead, Marvin found that the man was among the latter; the noxious gases or apoplexy, the doctor could not say in that brief survey. But dead he was, and Marvin felt no compunctions in taking possession of a carefully rolled object that was in the man's breast pocket.

After he had done all he could to assist the physicians the detective taxied to his hotel and presented himself to Gregorio.

His clothing torn and bloody, he was a terrible object, but he tried to assume his usual debonair air as he entered.

"Is this your stolen Corot?" he asked.

Gregorio grasped it eagerly, his face went ghastly white.

"Yes," he groaned, "but at what a price. Oh, my God!"

"Indeed the price was heavy; I hope it was worth it to you and a suffering world."

These words were grimly said, for Marvin felt that he had gone through an ordeal that would leave its scar to the end of his days.

"My friend," solemnly replied Gregorio, "I am not permitted to tell you how much peril

you have saved the world from. In the death of this man, or rather the monster who had this secret in his possession, the world has been freed from one of the arch conspirators of the twentieth century. It is well done.

"Your reward will be fitting. I cannot speak of money for this service, but you will know before many moons have passed. Do you happen to know what name he was using this time?"

Marvin glanced at him curiously as he told him.

"Ah, indeed! It was one of many. We who work from the other side of life are terribly handicapped, for we know just as little of many things here as you would of the conditions on the astral plane were you transported to that condition this moment.

"I can only repeat what I said before: It is well done!"

With which cryptic utterance Marvin had to be content, to this day not knowing whether the experience was occult or merely peculiar.

TRICK INSTRUMENTS

ONE of the instruments is commonly called the bells, or orchestra bells; in Germany called the "glockenspiel." It consists of a number of short bars of steel resting on straw ropes. The bars are played upon by short hammers, the metals of which are connected with the wood handles by whalebone. The full chromatic scale, two and a half octaves, are represented by the bars, which are toned by size. The instrument most like the bells is the xylophone, which consists of a number of pieces of wood strung together by two cords and resting on ropes of straw. The method of tuning the xylophone is curious. If a note is flat it is corrected in tone by having a section sawed off; if sharp, it is notched on the under side by a saw-cut.

The anvils in an orchestra are far from being such as smiths play upon by the side of a forge, though their tones are remarkably like those of the real article. The anvil has two pieces of hemi-octagonal brass, hollow and about eight inches long. Hemi-octagonal may not be the scientific term for describing a tube which would be octagonal if alike on both sides, but which looks as if it had been octagonal and sliced down its length and the first side covered over. That is what they are. They are contained in a little plush-lined case, and might be carried in an overcoat pocket, but when struck with a little hammer give out a sound like an anvil. It tells a story of the times that there has been so much music written of late relating to champagne drinking that instruments have been devised and patented to imitate the "pop" of a champagne cork. There are two such instruments. One is a simple wooden cylinder, a piston working in one end and a captive cork in the other. It is as simple as a boy's pop-gun, but the sound has a five-dollars-a-bottle bang that is most captivating.

The second pop-imitator, quite recently invented, can be worked more rapidly and made to imitate the sound around a race-course bar just after the field has won against long odds. This is a long brass cylinder, the piston running through the cork and having a bolt on that end to prevent the cork from flying off and hitting the ringer in the eye. The piston, pushed in rapidly, causes a deceptive "pop," and being as rapidly pushed back, plugs the cork tight in again, ready for another battle, which action can be kept up faster than the thirstiest crowd could cut the wire.

The crack of a whip is a noise that is heard under very different circumstances on the stage. It may be a chorus describing a rollicking sleighride, a Lady Gay Spanker, who emphasizes a story with a flourish of a whip, or the overseer in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Whatever the occasion, the man sitting at the end of the orchestra supplies the "crack." It is made with a little instrument that looks like a big razor strop split down to the handle and there hinged. It is worked with one hand, for very frequently, at the same time, sleigh-bells must be heard, and the other hand is employed in shaking a belt of silver bells right merrily.

BEWARE OF CLUES

BY

HARRY J. SAMUELS

MORLEY WEST worked with diligence, patience and a slight uneasiness. The little office safe of Wentworth & Company, jewelers, was not a complicated affair, nor was it an enigma; but when one specializes in opening safes, legally or illegally, and is at a loss as to the combination, and does not want to "blow it," he must put two and two together and be satisfied until he hits upon the right combination.

Finally the little safe door swung open. Morley got up from his squatting posture and took another look out of the little side window in the rear in the store. He saw, standing on the opposite side of the street, a policeman talking to a young couple. Had the policeman's presence been elsewhere, Morley would have been at greater ease. But, he concluded, it was safe for him to proceed.

Morley went back to the safe and opened a second inner door and pulled out a small drawer. His slender, gracefully gloved fingers removed the contents of the drawer—five packages, each containing five thousand dollars in bills—and put it into a brief case. He then took the drawer and put it back in its place, closed the inner door, then the outer one and put the pointer to the exact spot on the number dial of the combination whereat it had been before he had begun to open the safe.

Morley again looked out of the rear window, but he saw no one. Everything was clear sailing for him now. He opened the window and emerged to the outside, closing it after him. On the outside he breathed a sigh of relief, removed the cloth coverings from his shoes and put them into his coat pocket, and gently ungloved his hands.

Thus Morley West, burglar, again became Morley West, gentleman. He looked at his watch. It was 2:10 a. m. He decided that he had better hurry to his apartment and get some sleep, for the next day he was scheduled to have luncheon at the home of Arthur Wentworth, president of the jewelry company which he had just robbed. Wentworth was a lifelong friend of Morley's dead father.

Morley belonged to genteel society. He would have wealth at all costs; therefore the motive of his latest theft. But he was going to be doubly sure that he had left no clues, none for the finger-print expert, none for the hosts of city detectives; in fact, none for anybody. And as he walked toward his apartment he breathed another sigh of relief, for he was positive that he had left no clues.

Morley West sat on a comfortable divan in

the spacious parlor of the Wentworth mansion. Wentworth and his wife sat opposite him, and Marjorie Wentworth, their ten-year-old daughter, was toying on the floor with a ouija board.

"I was shocked when I read about the robbery in the morning's paper," said Morley with a bold effrontery; "it certainly must have been a clever piece of work!"

"It was," responded Wentworth, "but still it was the work of a clever amateur."

Morley bit his lip. "What makes you think so?" he asked.

"Because the thief apparently left no clues."

"But in my opinion a thief who leaves no clues is not an amateur," declared Morley, "but a subtle professional!"

"I don't agree with you, Morley, but nevertheless I am confident that the money will be returned to Wentworth & Company."

Morley eyed him suspiciously. "I don't quite get you," he said.

"That the thief will return the twenty-five thousand dollars of his own free will."

Wentworth's outspoken declaration was too much for Morley. Turning his attention to Marjorie on the floor, he asked: "What have you there? A new game?"

"No, a ouija board," answered Marjorie. "Ask it any question and it will give you a correct answer."

Marjorie sat down beside Morley on the divan, each placing a hand upon the board.

"Oh, ouija board," asked Morley, "tell us who stole twenty-five thousand dollars from Wentworth & Company."

Slowly but surely the ouija board registered M, then O, R, L, and by the time E was reached Morley's forehead was bedewed with perspiration. Placing the ouija board in Marjorie's lap, he said: "Try it again yourself; maybe it will spell out 'A R T H U R' this time."

This remark caused Wentworth and his wife to laugh. "Foolish that some people should believe in those boards," said Wentworth, "but sometimes they will get on a person's nerves."

This ordeal was getting on Morley's taut nerves. He concluded that at best he had better leave, so he excused himself and was soon on his way. When he reached the refreshing spring air he took a deep breath, then said to himself: "That certainly was a tough ordeal on a tender-nerved beginner like me. But I suppose it's like everything else—after one has been in the game for a while he will become toughened to it."

Morley awoke the next morning with a heavy head. He had been haunted all night with safes, policemen, ouija boards, detectives and what not. He ate his breakfast in haste, dressed in his best and went downtown. Not knowing the reason, he found himself suddenly looking into the display window of Wentworth & Company.

He was worried. He came to the conclusion that, after all, maybe he did leave a clue. He decided to go inside and try to get some information.

Going up to the counter, he asked the clerk to let him see some necktie clasps. The clerk recognized him as an intimate friend of the Wentworth family.

"I guess I'll take this one," said Morley, fastening the clasp to his necktie, then to his shirt; "it'll keep this tie from blowing helter-skelter."

He handed the clerk a ten-dollar bill. In a minute the clerk returned with his change.

"Anything new about the robbery?" asked Morley.

"Nothing," answered the clerk, "only that they are working upon a clue."

"A clue!" exclaimed Morley. "I understood by the paper that the thief didn't leave any clues."

"Since you read that article," said the clerk, "City Detective Willis has found a good clue, and he is working upon it now. Willis claims that within forty-eight hours he will have found the thief."

Morley left the store. When he reached the outside he was trembling. A fear had seized him—a fear of self. The clerk's words haunted him. "Within forty-eight hours Willis will have the thief. Within forty-eight hours I will no longer be Morley West, gentleman." The preceding statements became imbibed in his brain.

He hurried to his apartment and locked the door. He tried to read, but couldn't keep his thoughts together. He requested his landlady through the speaking tube to bring him some warm tea, but he couldn't drink it. For

the remainder of the day he paced the floor, back and forth and back and forth.

He pictured himself in convict's stripes, despised, loathed and jeered at by his friends for the remainder of his life.

Night came. He tried to sleep, but that was impossible. He heard the hall clock strike twelve. Suddenly he recalled Wentworth's words, "The thief will return the twenty-five thousand dollars of his own free will."

Morley got up and dressed hurriedly. He procured the twenty-five thousand dollars from its hiding-place and put it into the same brief case and left his apartment.

He reached Wentworth & Company at 1 a. m. He tried the little window and found it unlocked. Entering the building, he went directly to the little safe. It was a simple matter to open it since he had previously solved the combination. He took the twenty-five thousand dollars from the brief case and put it back into the drawer on the inside, then closed the safe door and departed.

On the outside Morley breathed a sigh of relief. He proceeded to an all-night restaurant and satisfied his empty stomach with a good meal.

Morley was awakened the next morning by the telephone ringing. Wentworth was on the other end of the line.

"Hello, is this you, Morley?"

"Yes."

"This is Wentworth. I'd like to see you some time to-day; a little matter concerning your father's estate. But don't put yourself out to come."

"All right; I'll drop in when you are home for luncheon. I've got nothing particular on for to-day."

When Morley entered the Wentworth mansion he was himself again—Morley West, gentleman.

After a brief discussion concerning the past settlement of Morley's father's estate, Wentworth suddenly faced him.

"The twenty-five thousand dollars was returned to my office safe last night!"

Morley was prepared for this, so, registering surprise, he exclaimed: "You don't say!"

"As I was telling you," calmly continued Wentworth, "the job was the work of an amateur."

"But what makes you think so?" asked Morley with a gigantic effort of will to compose himself.

"Because, while the would-be thief was sure to leave no clues on the inside, he overlooked the outside!"

"How so?"

"When the thief climbed out of the little rear window of the store he overlooked the fact that a young couple, in amour, in the sheltered shadows of the opposite side of the street, watched him. They followed him to his apartment. The morning after the robbery they reported to me their experience!"

Morley shrunk back, bewildered and stupefied.

"Morley West, you are a thief!" echoed Wentworth. "You took advantage of your intimate acquaintance with me to rob me. I had little Marjorie spell your name out on the ouija board so it would prey upon your conscience!

"I owe my very physical existence to your dead father," said Wentworth, confessing a truth, "and for that reason I am going to condition you. From now on you get a job and earn your dollars honestly, or you go to jail; take your choice!"

The Cappers

By J. M. SCANLAND

"ONE of my diamond bracelets has been stolen, and I know that the housemaid took it!" exclaimed Mrs. Lucy Parkman to Manager Menu of the Hotel Alexangeles.

"What evidence have you?" asked the manager, showing little interest. "Many robberies are reported here, and it often turns out that the valuables have been merely misplaced by the guests."

"Well, I put two bracelets on the dresser last night, and when I went down to breakfast this morning I wore only one."

"Are you sure that you left one of them on your dresser this morning?" was asked.

"Do you imagine that I would be so careless as not to remember what I did with a jewel that cost me $5,000?"

"This hotel is not responsible for the purported losses of valuables. We are responsible only when valuables are placed in the office safe, which is kept for that purpose," replied the manager tartly.

"Then I shall bring suit," retorted Mrs. Parkman as she left the office.

The lady was the wife of Macy Parkman, a speculator in Arkansas oil lands, and had come West to get rid of some of his suddenly acquired wealth. At Chicago she spent several thousand dollars on costumes and diamonds. The woman was of small figure, had black, round eyes and a sharp face, which was almost expressionless. Her dress was not becoming, and her manner indicated her uncultivated origin.

The house detective was called into the manager's office. He stated that on the evening before, when a crowd of tourists came down into the lobby after dinner, he took a position near the door, where he could see all and yet not attract attention to himself. He particularly observed Mrs. Parkman because of her loud talking, uproarious laughter, loud dress and flashing jewels.

"Do you think her jewels are genuine, or is she attempting a bunk game?" asked the manager.

"I think, sir, that the bracelets are genuine; that is, the diamonds are pure gems. She stood in the centre of a group and attracted much attention, and thinking that she might be some notable personage, I walked nearer and took a close view; so I am positive that the diamonds in the bracelets are real."

"Did you notice any so-called men-about-town in the group?"

"I was coming to that, sir," quickly replied the detective, as if to show that he had not been asleep. "I noticed a woman, rather large for her sex. She had coarse features, large hands, large nose and small grayish eyes. She was flashily dressed, and was accompanied by another woman with a broad face and thick lips. The second woman was of medium height and heavily set. Each of the women seemed to be about twenty-five or thirty years of age. They stood apart from the group, and centered their attention upon the lady who says she lost a bracelet. Occasionally they smiled sneeringly, which I understood to mean envy. Finally a man approached, and they chatted for several minutes, each occasionally looking at the woman with the bracelet. The man had a thick, round head covered with black hair that came low on his narrow forehead. He was dark-complexioned, was smoothly shaven, and appeared to be about forty years of age. The fellow was flashily dressed. I have often seen him in the lobby."

The manager called the housemaid on the second floor, who had charge of that section, including Mrs. Parkman's room.

As the maid entered the office she was surprised at seeing the house detective, and her

face flushed. This was noticed by the detective and the manager.

"The lady in No. 23 says that she has lost a diamond bracelet," said the manager, looking straight into the eyes of the servant in a half-accusing manner.

"I don't know anything about it, sir. I never saw a bracelet in her room," replied the maid in subdued tones.

"Was she in her room when you went in?" asked the detective sharply.

"No, sir. I was coming down the hall just as she was going out, and she said: 'I shall not lock my door, as you are going in to fix my room, but you be sure and lock it when you go out.' I then went into the next room, and while I was putting it in order I heard her door close. I thought that she had come back for something, but paid no attention to it."

"Did you look to see whether the one who last entered was Mrs. Parkman?"

"No, sir. As I said, I did not go in there until I got through with No. 25."

"Was any one with her when she came out?" asked the manager, knowing that Mrs. Parkman was the only one registered for that room.

"No, sir."

"Where was the other maid? Did you see any one else in the hall when you came out of 25?"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed the maid, her face brightening. "A lady had just come out of the elevator and passed Mrs. Parkman as she told me to be sure to lock her door."

"What kind of a looking lady was it?" intercepted the detective.

"Large, much larger than I am," replied the servant. She had a large flat nose and was dressed flashily."

"Does she room on that floor? Did you ever see her before?"

"No, sir. And that answers both questions," replied the maid.

"That is all; do not be uneasy. We don't suspect you," said the manager, his severe features relaxing into a smile. "That description," he added to the detective, "fits one of the women you saw watching Mrs. Parkman in the lobby."

"She must be a capper for the crook," commented the house detective.

"As this seems to be an unusual case, perhaps we had better get help from the police department," said the manager.

Detectives Bean and Jeffreys were called. The house detective related to them what he had seen on the evening previous in the lobby, and described the characters under suspicion.

Bean and Jeffreys exchanged glances. They knew the crooks.

"Have you gentlemen got a clue already?" asked the manager, smiling broadly.

"A suspicion," replied Bean. "The large, flat-nosed woman may be 'Big Mary,' who was a house servant in the Texas Hotel; the other seems to tally with the 'Oregon Widow,' whose picture we have in the Rogues' Gallery. She was charged with committing a robbery in Portland, and was suspected of poisoning her husband in Medford. And the description of the man fits Bill Wiswall, a confidence operator who is a particular friend of the widow."

"Would it be asking too much if we requested the pedigree of these characters?" inquired the house detective.

"Not in the least. 'Big Mary' is known as Mary Hinman; the 'Oregon Widow' is Tillie Thorworth, and Wiswall has no alias, but is well known to us as a confidence operator. The women cap for crooks and sell fraudulent mining shares as a side line."

"We are much obliged, gentlemen, and hope that with your assistance this mystery will soon be unraveled," said the manager.

"We will report in a day or two," said Bean, and the officers left the hotel.

About 8 o'clock that evening there was a knock at Mrs. Parkman's door. As she opened it she was confronted by a man who wore a full black beard and was dressed in a dark-blue suit. The lady looked at him a moment, and showing some fright, she exclaimed:

"Perhaps you have come to the wrong room?"

"I think not," replied the caller, turning back the lapel of his coat and showing a detective's badge. "I am from the Central office. You are the lady who lost a bracelet?"

"Yes. Walk right in, Mr.——"

"Wilson Riley, chief of the detective force."

"I am so glad that you have called. Take

that rocker. The hotel people couldn't do anything, and I presume they asked you to find the bracelet?" exclaimed the woman.

"Yes. They are rather slow."

"But how did you know the number of my room?" asked Mrs. Parkman.

"After we were put on the case we were naturally given your name and room number, so I called without sending up my card."

"Oh, yes. That is right. But did you find my bracelet?"

"We uncovered a bracelet, but I do not know whether it is yours."

"Did the housemaid have it? I just knew that it was that hussy."

"I am not allowed to tell, as there is no proof yet as to the ownership of the bracelet."

"Why, it is mine, of course. I have not heard of any one else losing one. Let me see it, and I'll tell you at once."

"It is at headquarters."

"Why did you not bring it? Why did you come without it? I can't see what else is to be done."

"The bracelet we uncovered is in the office of the property clerk and cannot be taken out. We must have yours to compare with it, and if they match, both are yours. If not, the other one belongs to some one else, who must prove ownership."

"I have given a description of my missing bracelet, and if that is not sufficient, you can look at this one."

"That is not enough," replied the man, looking at the jewel on the woman's scrawny arm.

"Do you mean that you want to take my bracelet to your office? I shall not trust it out of my sight!" exclaimed Mrs. Parkman, her face turning pale with anger.

"Then, madam, nothing can be done," said the visitor, rising with affected indifference and walking towards the door.

"Well, I suppose I shall have to do it," said Mrs. Parkman hesitatingly as she arose and unclasped the bracelet. The visitor turned, bowed, removed his hat and smiled.

"Now, I hope you will return soon," pleaded the woman as she placed the jewel in his hands.

"Within an hour. It is now half-past eight," replied the visitor, looking at his watch. "I'll be back before nine."

Mrs. Parkman threw herself into an armchair, placed her watch upon a table, and became absorbed in reading the highly colored details of a Western cowboy story. At 9 o'clock sharp she called up the office of the chief of police, as her caller had not yet returned.

"Yes, this is the police office. What is wanted?"

"I am Mrs. Parkman, the lady who lost the diamond bracely to-day. Why——"

"We are on the track of some suspects, but have found nothing yet."

"Not found the bracelet? Why, the chief of detectives was here an hour ago and said he had 'uncovered' a bracelet and wanted my other one so as to compare them. I presume the comparison shows that the one you 'uncovered' is the one I lost?"

"I do not quite understand your meaning," replied the chief.

"That is very strange, and I don't understand you. Mr. Riley, I believe that is his name, called here and said he was chief of the detectives and——"

"There is no such man as that on the force, and the chief of detectives, Mr. Lees, has not left this office to-night. He is now here."

"Then what officer got my bracelet?"

"Did you give your bracelet to any one? If so, you have been robbed again. No one from this office has called at your room to-night."

There was a scream and Mrs. Parkman fell to the floor in a faint.

Chief Glass and Chief of Detectives Lees immediately went to the woman's room to solve the mystery. Quite recovered now, she gave such a good description of the man who got the bracelet that the officers recognized him at once. The chief then phoned his detectives to pick up the suspected parties and brought Mrs. Parkman down to headquarters.

When they returned to the station Bean and Jeffries had Mrs. Hinman, Mrs. Thorworth and William Wiswall awaiting them.

"Here are the bracelets, and there are the prisoners. We found them in the Russell House," said Detective Jeffries.

That settled the case, and when the three crooks were convicted Mrs. Parkman hurried back to Arkansas, glad to get away from Los Angeles with her property intact.

Oriental Juggling

"MOST of the wonderful feats attributed to the jugglers of India and Japan existed only in the imagination of the fellows who told about them," once said the magician Kellar. "I have seen everything of note in the juggling business that India, China and Japan can produce, and I have never seen the juggler yet who could throw a ball of twine in the air to form a sort of Jack-and-the-beanstalk ladder, and then climb up out of sight and pull the string up after him, and stay up out of sight until a companion fired a pistol and brought him down to earth in shattered fragments, which presently came together and formed a living, uninjured man again—I tell you, honestly, I never saw the trick."

"That's curious, too."

"Yes; for everybody has read of it. Candidly, between you and me, I do not believe it can be done. But I'll tell you a clever trick I saw a juggler in India do. It is called the basket trick. The juggler explained to the spectators that he was going to kill his little boy, and asked them to choose a spot on the turf in the open air where he might perform the trick. He stationed himself at the chosen spot, his apparatus being a basket with a hinged lid, a little boy, and a sharp sword. He wore nothing but a breechclout. The juggler put the child in the basket, closed the lid, and muttered an incantation.

"Then he seized a large white cloth he had in readiness, threw one end over the basket and fastened the other end to his waist by tucking it down under the breechclout, leaving a portion hanging down below his knees. Then he drew the sword and plunged it through the basket. As the child's agonizing screams broke forth the man drew out the sword all dripping with blood. Again and again he plunged the sword through the basket, the child's screams growing fainter and fainter until they ceased altogether. The juggler asked that the basket be examined. It was opened and found empty. A gleeful shout was heard, and the company, looking in the direction whence it came, saw the juggler's child perched on the limb of an adjacent tree.

"That trick puzzled me," continued Mr. Kellar, "but I determined to fathom it should it cost me half my estate. I bought up the juggler—I paid him two rupees (about $1) to show me how it was done. Here's how: When the juggler is in the act of spreading the cloth over the basket the youngster slips out under cover of the cloth, crawls under the juggler, grasps a strap about the man's waist, and draws himself up between the juggler's legs. The cloth hanging from the man's waist hides the child. The child, of course, is well trained, and, from his unsuspected retreat, utters the necessary piercing shrieks at the proper moment. A concealed bit of sponge saturated with red liquid produces the blood stains. When the spectators rush forward to look into the basket the boy slips from his hiding-place and clambers up the nearest tree like a squirrel."

"Did you ever try the trick?"

"No; it can only be done with the Indian juggler's costume—the breechclout. Another clever trick of theirs was an artificial duck in a bowl of water. The duck appeared and disappeared at the will of the juggler, and swam around as if alive. The secret of the trick was that the bottom of the bowl was pierced with a tiny hole through which a horse hair was passed, one end of the hair being attached to the duck and the other held by the juggler. A heavy duck was first passed around among the spectators and placed in the bowl of water, where it sank out of sight by its own weight.

Apparently it immediately rose to the surface again, but it was really the light-weight duck manipulated by the horse hair that arose in sight.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29. "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. H. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
77 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by Wm. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89. "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Bechdolt.
95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "A Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Gottlieb Jacoba.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by Bulah Poynter.
107 "Hell's Hinges," by Hamilton Craigie.
108 "The Wolf," by Katherine Stagg.
109 "The Brass Button," by Jack Bechdolt.

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For the first time in twenty-five years the Puget Sound territory is infested with the big snowy owls of the Arctic.

This picturesque bird of the far north, probably driven from home by exceptionally severe weather, may presage a continued cold, stormy winter and spring over the entire United States.

The Arctic owl lives on rabbits, mice, other small mammals or ptarmigan, which in very severe weather conditions hibernate in warm dens or move southward. It is believed the white owls have migrated south into the United States in search of food.

The ferocity of this owl is well known. A hunter on the Nisqually Flats shot a mallard that fell upon land and, going to retrieve his prize, found the wounded bird attacked by an Arctic owl, six feet across the spread of wings. Instead of flying at the approach of man, the owl clapped its big beak vigorously and spread its wings in defiance. As the hunter advanced the owl dashed at him and for several minutes there was a terrific fight. The owl had to be shot.

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"I am eighty-three years old and I doctored for rheumatism ever since I came out of the army over fifty years ago," writes J. B. Ashelman. "Like many others, I spent money freely for so-called 'cures,' and I have read about 'Uric Acid' until I could almost taste it. I could not sleep nights or walk without pain; my hands were so sore and stiff I could not hold a pen. But now, as if by magic, I am again in active business and can walk with ease or write all day with comfort. Friends are surprised at the change."

HOW IT HAPPENED.

Mr. Ashelman is only one of thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints by taking treatments supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that Uric Acid never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe; and that without it we could not live.

These statements may seem strange to some folks, who have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" bumbug. It took Mr. Ashelman fifty years to find out this truth. He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders and recover his strength from "The Inner Mysteries," a remarkable book now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble.

NOTE: If any reader of the "Mystery Magazine" wishes the book that reveals these facts regarding the true cause and cure of rheumatism, facts that were overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past, simply send a post card or letter to H. P. Clearwater, No. 1324-A Street, Hallowell, Maine, and it will be sent by return mail without any charge whatever. Cut out this notice lest you forget! If not a sufferer yourself hand this good news to some afflicted friend.

CUTTING ICE WITH VIOLIN MUSIC

How many people know that music causes ice, and even steel, to become so brittle that it "snaps" easily?

In Siberia boys and girls often put this knowledge to good use. During the winter, most of the rivers freeze down to the mud on the bottom. Even the wells become so frozen that they have to be heated before any water may be drawn.

This proves so long and costly that the only alternative is to cut blocks of ice and store them in some odd corner of the home until wanted.

In a solid mass ice is not easy to break, as you know. If struck with heavy weights, it only splinters instead of breaking in lumps.

To avoid this Siberian people drill holes in the ice, according to how they wish to break it. A boy or girl then commences "fiddling" away on a violin.

The effect is curious. As the violin is played, the vibrations travel down the holes in the ice, penetrating right into the depths, and cause the ice to become brittle. The blocks can then be chipped out with a hammer quite easily.

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